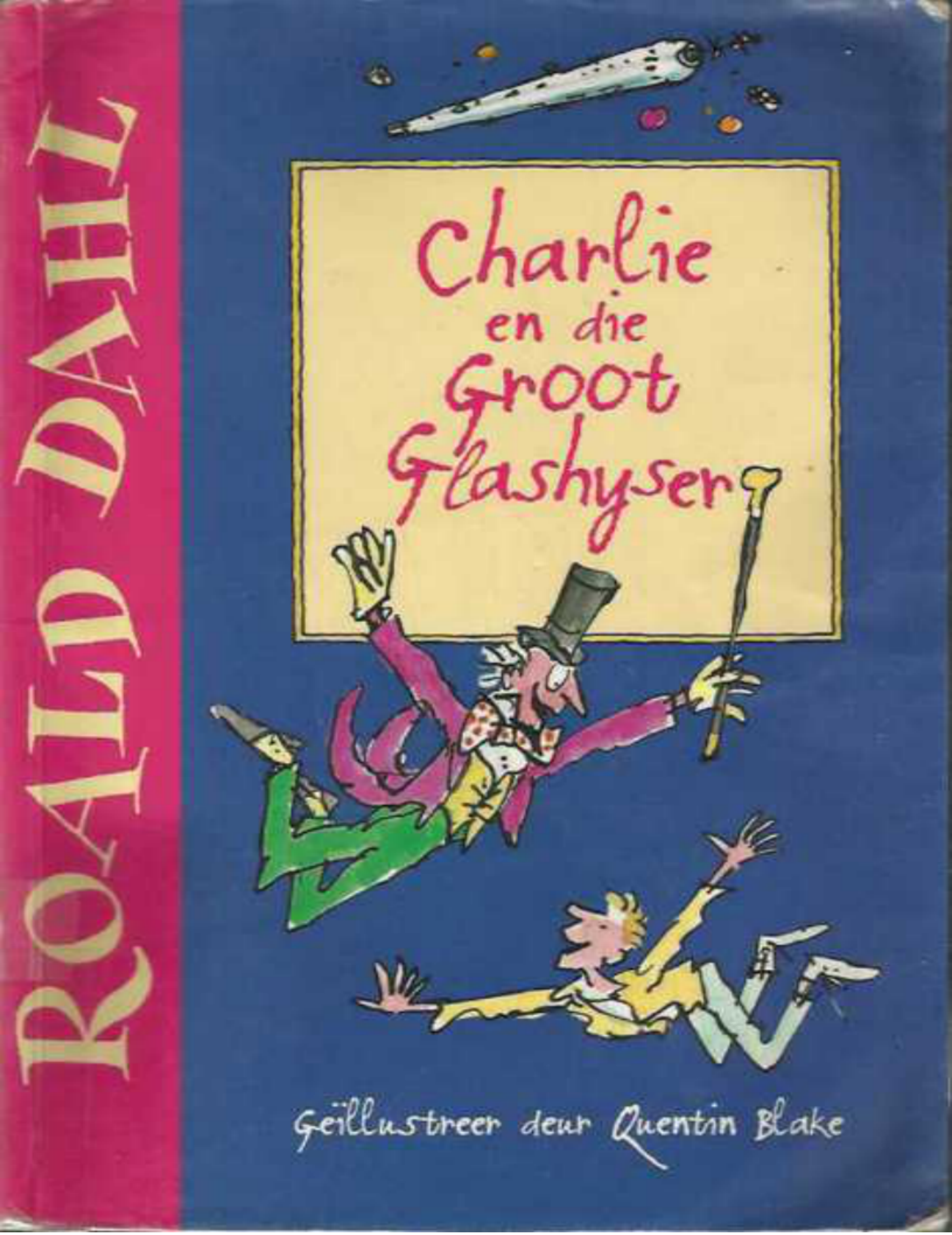

ROALD DAHL
Charlie en die Groot Glashyser
Geïllustreer deur Quentin Blake

ROALD DAHL

Charlie and the

Great Glass Elevator

Charlie en die Groot Glashyser

Mr Wonka Goes Too Far

The last time we saw Charlie, he was riding high above his home town in the Great Glass Lift. Only a short while before, Mr Wonka had told him that the whole gigantic fabulous Chocolate Factory was his, and now our small friend was returning in triumph with his entire family to take over. The passengers in the Lift (just to remind you) were:

Charlie Bucket, our hero.

Mr Willy Wonka, chocolate-maker extraordinary.

Mr and Mrs Bucket, Charlie's father and mother.

Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine, Mr Bucket's father and mother.

Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina, Mrs Bucket's father and mother.

Grandma Josephine, Grandma Georgina and Grandpa George were still in bed, the bed having been pushed on board just before take-off. Grandpa Joe, as you remember, had got out of bed to go around the Chocolate Factory with Charlie.

The Great Glass Lift was a thousand feet up and cruising nicely. The sky was brilliant blue. Everybody on board was wildly excited at the thought of going to live in the famous Chocolate Factory.

Grandpa Joe was singing. Charlie was jumping up and down. Mr and Mrs Bucket were smiling for the first time in years, and the three old ones in the bed were grinning at one another with pink toothless gums.

'What in the world keeps this crazy thing up in the air?' croaked

Grandma Josephine.

'Madam,' said Mr Wonka, 'it is not a lift any longer. Lifts only go up and down inside buildings. But now that it has taken us up into the sky, it has become an ELEVATOR. It is THE GREAT GLASS ELEVATOR.'

'And what keeps it up?' said Grandma Josephine.

'Skyhooks,' said Mr Wonka.

'You amaze me,' said Grandma Josephine.

'Dear lady,' said Mr Wonka, 'you are new to the scene. When you have been with us a little longer, nothing will amaze you.'

'These skyhooks,' said Grandma Josephine. 'I assume one end is hooked on to this contraption we're riding in. Right?'

'Right,' said Mr Wonka.

'What's the other end hooked on to?' said Grandma Josephine.

'Every day,' said Mr Wonka, 'I get deafer and deafer. Remind me, please, to call up my ear doctor the moment we get back.'

'Charlie,' said Grandma Josephine. 'I don't think I trust this gentleman very much.'

'Nor do I,' said Grandma Georgina. 'He footles around.'

Charlie leaned over the bed and whispered to the two old women. 'Please,' he said, 'don't spoil everything. Mr Wonka is a fantastic man. He's my friend. I love him.'

'Charlie's right,' whispered Grandpa Joe, joining the group. 'Now you be quiet, Josie, and don't make trouble.'

'We must hurry!' said Mr Wonka. 'We have so much time and so little to do! No! Wait! Cross that out! Reverse it! Thank you! Now back to the factory!' he cried, clapping his hands once and springing two feet in the air with two feet. 'Back we fly to the factory! But we must go up before we can come down. We must go higher and higher!'

'What did I tell you,' said Grandma Josephine. 'The man's cracked!'

'Be quiet, Josie,' said Grandpa Joe. 'Mr Wonka knows exactly what he's doing.'

'He's cracked as a crab!' said Grandma Georgina.

'We must go higher!' said Mr Wonka. 'We must go tremendously high! Hold on to your stomach!' He pressed a brown button. The Elevator shuddered, and then with a fearful whooshing noise it shot vertically upward like a rocket. Everybody clutched hold of everybody else and as the great machine gathered speed, the rushing whooshing sound of the wind outside grew louder and louder and shriller and shriller until it became a piercing shriek and you had to yell to make yourself heard.

'Stop!' yelled Grandma Josephine. 'Joe, you make him stop! I want to get off!'

'Save us!' yelled Grandma Georgina.

'Go down!' yelled Grandpa George.

'No, no!' Mr Wonka yelled back. 'We've got to go up!'

'But why?' they all shouted at once. 'Why up and not down?'

'Because the higher we are when we start coming down, the faster we'll all be going when we hit,' said Mr Wonka. 'We've got to be going at an absolutely sizzling speed when we hit.'

'When we hit what?' they cried.

'The factory, of course,' answered Mr Wonka.

'You must be whackers,' said Grandma Josephine. 'We'll all be pulpified!'

'We'll be scrambled like eggs!' said Grandma Georgina.

'That,' said Mr Wonka, 'is a chance we shall have to take.'

'You're joking,' said Grandma Josephine. 'Tell us you're joking.'

‘Madam,’ said Mr Wonka, ‘I never joke.’

‘Oh, my dears!’ cried Grandma Georgina. ‘We’ll be lixivated, every one of us!’

‘More than likely,’ said Mr Wonka.

Grandma Josephine screamed and disappeared under the bedclothes, Grandma Georgina clutched Grandpa George so tight he changed shape. Mr and Mrs Bucket stood hugging each other, speechless with fright. Only Charlie and Grandpa Joe kept moderately cool. They had travelled a long way with Mr Wonka and had grown accustomed to surprises. But as the Great Elevator continued to streak upward further and further away from the earth, even Charlie began to feel a trifle nervous. ‘Mr Wonka!’ he yelled above the noise, ‘what I don’t understand is why we’ve got to come down at such a terrific speed.’

‘My dear boy,’ Mr Wonka answered, ‘if we don’t come down at a terrific speed, we’ll never burst our way back in through the roof of the factory. It’s not easy to punch a hole in a roof as strong as that.’

‘But there’s a hole in it already,’ said Charlie. ‘We made it when we came out.’

‘Then we shall make another,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘Two holes are better than one. Any mouse will tell you that.’

Higher and higher rushed the Great Glass Elevator until soon they could see the countries and oceans of the Earth spread out below them like a map. It was all very beautiful, but when you are standing on a glass floor looking down, it gives you a nasty feeling. Even Charlie was beginning to feel frightened now. He hung on tightly to Grandpa Joe’s hand and looked up anxiously into the old man’s face. ‘I’m scared, Grandpa,’ he said.

Grandpa Joe put an arm around Charlie’s shoulders and held him close. ‘So am I, Charlie,’ he said.

‘Mr Wonka!’ Charlie shouted. ‘Don’t you think this is about high enough?’

‘Very nearly,’ Mr Wonka answered. ‘But not quite. Don’t talk to me now, please. Don’t disturb me. I must watch things very carefully at this stage. Split-second timing, my boy, that’s what it’s got to be. You

see this green button. I must press it at exactly the right instant. If I'm just half a second late, then we'll go too high!'

'What happens if we go too high?' asked Grandpa Joe.

'Do please stop talking and let me concentrate!' Mr Wonka said.

At that precise moment, Grandma Josephine poked her head out from under the sheets and peered over the edge of the bed. Through the glass floor she saw the entire continent of North America nearly two hundred miles below and looking no bigger than a bar of chocolate. 'Someone's got to stop this maniac!' she screeched and she shot out a wrinkled old hand and grabbed Mr Wonka by the coat-tails and yanked him backwards on to the bed.

'No, no!' cried Mr Wonka, struggling to free himself. 'Let me go! I have things to see to! Don't disturb the pilot!'

'You madman!' shrieked Grandma Josephine, shaking Mr Wonka so fast his head became a blur. 'You get us back home this instant!'

'Let me go!' cried Mr Wonka, 'I've got to press that button or we'll go too high! Let me go! Let me go!' But Grandma Josephine hung on. 'Charlie!' shouted Mr Wonka. 'Press the button! The green one! Quick, quick, quick!'

Charlie leaped across the Elevator and banged his thumb down on the green button. But as he did so, the Elevator gave a mighty groan and rolled over on to its side and the rushing whooshing noise stopped altogether. There was an eerie silence.

'Too late!' cried Mr Wonka. 'Oh, my goodness me, we're cooked!' As he spoke, the bed with the three old ones in it and Mr Wonka on top lifted gently off the floor and hung suspended in mid-air. Charlie and Grandpa Joe and Mr and Mrs Bucket also floated upwards so that in a twink the entire company, as well as the bed, were floating around like balloons inside the Great Glass Elevator.

'Now look what you've done!' said Mr Wonka, floating about.

'What happened?' Grandma Josephine called out. She had floated clear of the bed and was hovering near the ceiling in her nightshirt.

'Did we go too far?' Charlie asked.

‘Too far?’ cried Mr Wonka. ‘Of course we went too far! You know where we’ve gone, my friends? We’ve gone into orbit!’

They gaped, they gasped, they stared. They were too flabbergasted to speak.

‘We are now rushing around the Earth at seventeen thousand miles an hour,’ Mr Wonka said. ‘How does that grab you?’

‘I’m choking!’ gasped Grandma Georgina. ‘I can’t breathe!’

‘Of course you can’t,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘There’s no air up here.’ He sort of swam across under the ceiling to a button marked OXYGEN. He pressed it. ‘You’ll be all right now,’ he said. ‘Breathe away.’

‘This is the queerest feeling,’ Charlie said, swimming about. ‘I feel like a bubble.’

‘It’s great,’ said Grandpa Joe. ‘It feels as though I don’t weigh anything at all.’

‘You don’t,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘None of us weighs anything — not even one ounce.’

‘What piffle!’ said Grandma Georgina. ‘I weigh one hundred and thirty-seven pounds exactly.’

‘Not now you don’t,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘You are completely weightless.’

The three old ones, Grandpa George, Grandma Georgina and Grandma Josephine, were trying frantically to get back into bed, but without success. The bed was floating about in mid-air. They, of course, were also floating, and every time they got above the bed and tried to lie down, they simply floated up out of it. Charlie and Grandpa Joe were hooting with laughter. ‘What’s so funny?’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘We’ve got you out of bed at last,’ said Grandpa Joe.

‘Shut up and help us back!’ snapped Grandma Josephine.

‘Forget it,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘You’ll never stay down. Just keep floating around and be happy.’

‘The man’s a madman!’ cried Grandma Georgina. ‘Watch out, I say, or he’ll lixivate the lot of us!’

Meneer Wonka gaan te ver

Toe ons Charlie laas gesien het, was hy besig om in die Glashyser hoog bokant sy tuisdorp te ry. Net ’n kort rukkie vantevore het meneer Wonka hom vertel die hele reusagtige, fabelagtige Sjokoladefabriek behoort aan hom en nou is ons klein vriend triomfantelik saam met sy hele gesin op pad terug soontoe om die fabriek oor te neem. Die passasiers in die hyser (net om jou te her inner) is:
Charlie Bucket, ons held.
Meneer Willy Wonka, ’n meesterlike sjokolademaker. Meneer en mevrou Bucket, Charlie se pa en ma.
Oupa Joe en ouma Josephine, meneer Bucket se pa en ma.
Oupa George en ouma Georgina, mevrou Bucket se
pa en ma.
Ouma Josephine, ouma Georgina en oupa George is nog in die bed, want hulle is sommer daarin aan boord gestoot voor die hyser in die lug op geskiet het. Soos jy sal onthou, het oupa Joe uit die bed geklim om saam met Charlie na die Sjokoladefabriek toe te gaan.
Die Glashyser is nou ’n duisend voet bo die Aarde en
vlieg alte lekker. Die lug is helderblou. Almal aan boord
is baie opgewonde om te dink hulle gaan nou in die beroemde Sjokoladefabriek bly.

Oupa Joe sing.

en die drie oumense in die bed grinnik vir mekaar met pienk, tandlose tandvleise.

“Wat op aarde hou hierdie ding in die lug?” vra ouma
Josephine met ’n kraakstem.
“Mevrou,” sê meneer Wonka, “dit is nie ’n gewone hyser hierdie nie. Hysers ry op en af binne-in geboue.
Maar hierdie een vat ons hoog in die lug op, so dis ’n BAIE BUITENGEWONE HYSER. Dit is DIE GROOT GLASHYSER.”
“ En wat hou dit
in die lug?” wil inima Josephine weet.
“Lughake,” sê meneer Wonka.
“ Verstommend, ”
sê ouma Josephine.
“Liewe dame,” sê meneer Wonka, “u is nuut op die loneel. As u eers ’n bietjie langer by ons is, sal niks u nicer verstom nie.”

“Lughake,” sê ouma Josephine. “Ek veronderstel die
oen kant is vasgehaak aan hierdie affêre waarin ons ry?
Keg?”
“Reg,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Waaraan is die ander kant vasgehaak?” vra ouma
Josephine.
“Ek raak by die dag dower en dower,” sê meneer Wonka. “Herinner my asseblief om my oordokter te bel sodra ons tuis kom.”
“Charlie,” sê ouma Josephine. “Ek dink nie ek vertrou
hierdie man nie.”
“Ek ook nie,” sê ouma Georgina. “Hy’s te gladdemond.”
(‘harlie leun oor die bed en fluister vir die twee ou
vrouens. “Asseblief,” sê hy, “moenie alles bederf nie. Mc-neer Wonka is ’n fantastiese man. Hy’s my vriend. Ek is mal oor hom.”
“Charlie is reg,” fluister oupa Joe, wat ook by die groep aansluit. “Bly nou stil, Josie, en moenie moeilikheid maak nie.”
“Ons moet opskud!” sê meneer Wonka. “Ons het
so baie tyd en so min om te doen. Nee, wag! Vee dit uit! Ruil die woorde om! Dankie! Terug fabriek toe met ons!” roep hy uit terwyl hy sy hande een keer klap en met sy twee voet hoog in die lug op spring met sy twee voete. “Ons vlieg terug fabriek toe! Maar ons moet eers opgaan voor ons kan afgaan. Ons moet hoër en hoër
gaan!I”
“Wat het ek julle gesê,” sê ouma Josephine. “Die man is getik.”
“Bly stil, Josie,” sê oupa Joe. “Meneer Wonka weet
presies wat hy doen.”
“Hy’s so gek soos ’n gans!” sê ouma Georgina.
“Ons moet hoër opgaan!” kondig meneer Wonka aan. “Ons moet ontsaglik hoog opgaan! Hou vas julle mae! Hy druk ’n bruin knoppie. Die hyser sidder en skiet dan met ’n vreesaanjaende swoesj-geluid soos ’n vuurpyl verder boontoe. Almal klou aan almal vas en
soos wat die hyser spoed optel, word die wind se geswoesj al harder en harder en skriller en skriller tot dit later só raas dat ’n mens moet skree om jouself hoorbaar te maak.
“Stop!” gil ouma Josephine. “Joe, sê hy moet stop! Ek wil uitklim!”
“Red ons!” gil ouma Georgina.
“Gaan af ondertoe!” gil oupa George.
“Nee, nee!” gil meneer Wonka terug. “Ons moet nog hoër opgaan!”
“Maar hoekom?” skree hulle almal gelyk.
“Want hoe hoër ons opgaan, hoe vinniger sal ons kan afkom en hoe harder gaan ons dit tref,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ons moet dit teen ’n absoluut sissende spoed tref.”
“Wat tref?” gil almal.
“Die fabriek, natuurlik,” antwoord meneer Wonka.

“Jy moet kens wees,” sê ouma Josephine. “Ons gaan almal ’n papperny wees.”
“Ons sal soos roereiers lyk!” sê ouma Georgina.
“Dit,” sê meneer Wonka, “is ’n kans wat ons maar net moet vat.”
“Jy maak ’n grap,” sê ouma Josephine. “Sê vir ons jy
maak ’n grap.”
“Mevrou,” sê meneer Wonka, “ek maak nooit grappe me.
“O, my liewe land!” roep ouma Georgina uit. “Ons gaan verbrysel word, elke enkele een van ons!”
“U’s heel moontlik reg,” sê meneer Wonka.
Ouma Josephine los ’n kreet en verdwyn onder die beddegoed. Ouma Georgina klou so styf aan oupa George vas dat hy skoon van vorm verander. Meneer en mevrou Bucket hou mekaar vas, sprakeloos van vrees. Net Charlie en oupa Joe lyk heel op hulle gemak. Hulle het al ver saam met meneer Wonka gereis en is teen hierdie tyd gewoond aan verrassings. Maar die hyser skiet steeds verder en verder van die Aarde af weg en selfs Charlie begin nou effens senuweeagtig raak. “Meneer Wonka,” gil hy bo die geraas, “wat ek nie verstaan nie is hoekom ons teen so ’n verskriklike spoed moet ondertoe gaan.”
“My liewe seun,” antwoord meneer Wonka, “as ons nie teen ’n verskriklike spoed terugvlieg nie, gaan ons dit nooit regkry om deur die fabriek se dak te bars nie.
Dis nie maklik om ’n gat in so ’n sterk dak te maak me.
“Maar daar is klaar ’n gat in,” sê Charlie. “Ons het dit
gemaak toe ons daar uit is.”
“Dan maak ons nog een,” sê meneer Wonka. “Twee gate is beter as een. Enige muis sal dit vir jou sê.”
Die Groot Glashyser vlieg al hoër en hoër en dis nie
lank nie of hulle sien die Aarde se kontinente en oseane soos ’n landkaart onder hulle uitstrek. Dit is alles baie mooi, maar as jy op ’n glasvloer staan en ondertoe kyk, laat dit jou half kriewelrig voel. Selfs Charlie raak nou bang. Hy hou styf aan oupa Joe se hand vas en kyk vreesbevange na die oubaas toe op. “Ek is bang, Oupa,” sê hy.
Oupa Joe sit sy arm om Charlie se skouers en hou hom
styf vas. “Ek ook, Charlie,” sê hy.
“Meneer Wonka!” skree Charlie. “Dink jy nie dis nou hoog genoeg nie?”
“Baie amper,” antwoord meneer Wonka. “Maar nog
nie heeltemal nie. Moet asseblief nie nou met my praat nie. Moenie my pla nie. Ek moet sake nou baie fyn dophou. Presisie, my seun, dis wat nou allerbelangrik is. Sien jy hierdie groen knoppie? Ek moet dit op presies die regte oomblik druk. As ek net ’n halfsekonde laat is, sal ons te hoog opgaan!”
“Wat gebeur as ons te hoog opgaan?” vra oupa Joe.

“Hou asseblief op praat en laat my konsentreer!” sê meneer Wonka.
Op daardie presiese oomblik steek ouma J osephine haar
kop onder die beddegoed uit en loer oor die bed se rand. Deur die glasvloer sien sy die hele NoordAmerikaanse vasteland amper tweehonderd myl onder hulle en dit lyk
nou niks groter as ’n sjokoladestafie nie. “Iemand moet hierdie maniak keer!” gil sy. Haar een verrimpelde ou hand skiet uit, gryp meneer Wonka aan sy swaelstert en pluk horn tot op die bed.
“Nee, nee!” skree meneer Wonka en spartel om los te kom. “Los my! Ek het dinge om te doen! Moenie die vlieënier hinder nie!”
“Jou mal maaifoedie!” gil ouma Josephine en skud meneer Wonka so vinnig dat sy kop soos ’n woer-woer lyk. “Vat ons nou op die daad terug huis toe!”
“Los my!” skree meneer Wonka. “Ek moet daardie
knoppie druk, anders gaan ons te hoog op! Los my! Los my!” Maar ouma Josephine hou vas. “Charlie!” gil meneer Wonka. “Druk die knoppie! Die groene! Gou, gou, gou!” Charlie spring tot aan die ander kant van die hyser
en druk met sy duim op die groen knoppie. Maar soos wat hy dit doen, gee die hyser ’n magtige brul en rol op sy sy en die suisende swoesj-geluid hou heeltemal op. Dis onheilspellend stil.
“Te laat!” kondig meneer Wonka aan. “O genade, ons is in die sop!”
Terwyl hy nog praat, styg die bed met die drie oumense en meneer Wonka doodluiters van die vloer af op en bly in die lug hang. Charlie en oupa Joe en meneer en mevrou Bucket dryf ook op boontoe en dis nie lank nie of almal van hulle, die bed inkluis, sweef soos ballonne in die Groot Glashyser rond.
“Kyk wat het julle nou aangevang!” sê meneer Wonka al
swewende.
“Wat het gebeur?” roep ouma Josephine uit. Sy het van die bed af opgestyg en sweef nou naby die dak in haar nagkabaai rond.

“Het ons te ver gegaan?” vra Charlie.
“Te verV’ skree meneer Wonka. “Natuurlik het ons te vcr gegaan! Weet julle waar is ons nou, my vriende? Ons is in ’n wentelbaan!”
Hulle snak, hulle staar verstar. Hulle is te verslae om re praat.
“Ons jaag nou om die Aarde teen ’n spoed van sewentienduisend myl per uur,” sê meneer Wonka. “Wat dink julle cl a ar van?”
“Ek verstik!” snak ouma Georgina. “Ek kan nie
asemhaal nie!”
“Natuurlik kan u nie,” sê meneer Wonka, “Daar’s niks lug hier bo nie.” Hy beweeg met sulke snaakse swembewegings met die dak langs tot by ’n knoppie
gemerk SUURSTOF. Hy druk dit. “Julie sal nou beter voel,” sê hy.

"Haal net gewoonweg asem."
"Dis die snaaksste gevoel," sê Charlie terwyl hy in die lug rondswem. "Ek voel soos 'n borrel."
"Dis heerlik," sê oupa Joe. "Dit voel of ek niks weeg me.
"Inderdaad," sê meneer Wonka. "Nie een van ons weeg enigiets nie - nie eens 'n ons nie."
"Snert!" snou ouma Georgina horn toe. "Ek weeg presies eenhonderd sewe-en-dertig pond!"
"Nie nou nie," sê meneer Wonka. "U is nou gewigloos."
Die drie oumense, oupa George, ouma Georgina en ouma Josephine, probeer naarstiglik terug in die bed kom, maar tevergeefs. Die bed sweef in die lug rond, en hulle natuurlik ook, en elke keer wat hulle bo die bed kom en probeer inklim, begin hulle net weer opstyg. Charlie en oupa Joe kraai van die lag. "Wat is so snaaks?" wil ouma Josephine weet.
"Ons het julle uiteindelik uit die bed gekry," sê oupa
Joe.
"Bly stil en help ons terug daarin kom!" sê ouma
Josephine kwaai.
"Vergeet dit," sê meneer Wonka. "Julle sal aanhou opstyg. Hou nou maar net aan rondsweef en geniet dit." "Die man is mal verby!" skree ouma Georgina. "Ek
waarsku julle! Hy gaan ons almal verbrysel!"

Space Hotel 'U.S.A.'

Mr Wonka's Great Glass Elevator was not the only thing orbiting the Earth at that particular time. Two days before, the United States of America had successfully launched its first Space Hotel, a gigantic sausage-shaped capsule no less than one thousand feet long. It was called Space Hotel 'U.S.A.' and it was the marvel of the space age. It had inside it a tennis-court, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, a children's playroom and five hundred luxury bedrooms, each with a private bath. It was fully air-conditioned. It was also equipped with a gravity-making machine so that you didn't float about inside it. You walked normally.

This extraordinary object was now speeding round and round the earth at a height of 240 miles. Guests were to be taken up and down by a taxi-service of small capsules blasting off from Cape Kennedy every hour on the hour, Mondays to Fridays. But as yet there was nobody on board at all, not even an astronaut. The reason for this was that no one had really believed such an enormous thing would ever get off the ground without blowing up.

But the launching had been a great success and now that the Space Hotel was safely in orbit, there was a tremendous hustle and bustle to send up the first guests. It was rumoured that the President of the United States himself was going to be among the first to stay in the hotel, and of course there was a mad rush by all sorts of other people across the world to book rooms. Several kings and queens had cabled the White House in Washington for reservations, and a Texas millionaire called Orson Cart, who was about to marry a Hollywood starlet called Helen Highwater, was offering one hundred thousand dollars a day for the honeymoon suite.

But you cannot send guests to an hotel unless there are lots of people there to look after them, and that explains why there was yet another interesting object orbiting the earth at that moment. This was the large Transport Capsule containing the entire staff for Space Hotel 'U.S.A.' There were managers, assistant managers, desk-clerks, waitresses, bell-boys, chambermaids, pastry chefs and hall porters. The capsule they were travelling in was manned by the three famous astronauts, Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler, all of them handsome, clever and brave.

'In exactly one hour,' said Shuckworth, speaking to the passengers over the loudspeaker, 'we shall link up with Space Hotel "U.S.A.", your happy home for the next ten years. And any moment now, if you look straight ahead, you should catch your first glimpse of this magnificent space-ship. Ah-ha! I see something there! That must be it, folks! There's definitely something up there ahead of us!'

Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler, as well as the managers, assistant managers, desk-clerks, waitresses, bell-boys, chambermaids, pastry chefs and hall porters, all stared excitedly through the windows. Shuckworth fired a couple of small rockets to make the capsule go faster, and they began to catch up very quickly.

'Hey!' yelled Showler. 'That isn't our space hotel!'

'Holy rats!' cried Shanks. 'What in the name of Nebuchadnezzar is it!'

'Quick! Give me the telescope!' yelled Shuckworth. With one hand he focused the telescope and with the other he flipped the switch connecting him to Ground Control.

'Hello, Houston!' he cried into the mike. 'There's something crazy

going on up here! There's a thing orbiting ahead of us and it's not like any space-ship I've ever seen, that's for sure!'

'Describe it at once,' ordered Ground Control in Houston.

'It's … it's all made of glass and it's kind of square and it's got lots of people inside it! They're all floating about like fish in a tank!'

'How many astronauts on board?'

'None,' said Shuckworth. 'They can't possibly be astronauts.'

'What makes you say that?'

'Because at least three of them are in nightshirts!'

'Don't be a fool, Shuckworth!' snapped Ground Control. 'Pull yourself together, man! This is serious!'

'I swear it!' cried poor Shuckworth. 'There's three of them in nightshirts! Two old women and one old man! I can see them clearly! I can even see their faces! Jeepers, they're older than Moses! They're about ninety years old!'

'You've gone mad, Shuckworth!' shouted Ground Control. 'You're fired! Give me Shanks!'

'Shanks speaking,' said Shanks. 'Now listen here, Houston. There's these three old birds in nightshirts floating around in this crazy glass box and there's a funny little guy with a pointed beard wearing a black top-hat and a plum-coloured velvet tail-coat and bottle-green trousers …'

'Stop!' screamed Ground Control.

'That's not all,' said Shanks. 'There's also a little boy about ten years old …'

'That's no boy, you idiot!' shouted Ground Control. 'That's an astronaut in disguise! It's a midget astronaut dressed up as a little boy! Those old people are astronauts too! They're all in disguise!'

'But who are they?' cried Shanks.

‘How the heck would I know?’ said Ground Control. ‘Are they heading for our Space Hotel?’

‘That’s exactly where they are heading!’ cried Shanks. ‘I can see the Space Hotel now about a mile ahead.’

‘They’re going to blow it up!’ yelled Ground Control. ‘This is desperate! This is …’ Suddenly his voice was cut off and Shanks heard another quite different voice in his earphones. It was deep and rasping.

‘I’ll take charge of this,’ said the deep rasping voice. ‘Are you there, Shanks?’

‘Of course I’m here,’ said Shanks. ‘But how dare you butt in. Keep your big nose out of this. Who are you anyway?’

‘This is the President of the United States,’ said the voice.

‘And this is the Wizard of Oz,’ said Shanks. ‘Who are you kidding?’

‘Cut the piffle, Shanks,’ snapped the President. ‘This is a national emergency!’

‘Good grief!’ said Shanks, turning to Shuckworth and Showler. ‘It really is the President. It’s President Gilligrass himself … Well, hello there, Mr President, sir. How are you today?’

‘How many people are there in that glass capsule?’ rasped the President.

‘Eight,’ said Shanks. ‘All floating.’

‘Floating?

‘We’re outside the pull of gravity up here, Mr President. Everything floats. We’d be floating ourselves if we weren’t strapped down. Didn’t you know that?’

‘Of course I knew it,’ said the President. ‘What else can you tell me about that glass capsule?’

‘There’s a bed in it,’ said Shanks. ‘A big double bed and that’s floating too.’

‘A bed!’ barked the President. ‘Whoever heard of a bed in a spacecraft!’

‘I swear it’s a bed,’ said Shanks.

‘You must be loopy, Shanks,’ declared the President. ‘You’re dotty as a doughnut! Let me talk to Showler!’

‘Showler here, Mr President,’ said Showler, taking the mike from Shanks. ‘It is a great honour to talk to you, Mr President, sir.’

‘Oh, shut up!’ said the President. ‘Just tell me what you see.’

‘It’s a bed all right, Mr President. I can see it through my telescope. It’s got sheets and blankets and a mattress …’

‘That’s not a bed, you drivelling thickwit!’ yelled the President. ‘Can’t you understand it’s a trick! It’s a bomb. It’s a bomb disguised as a bed! They’re going to blow up our magnificent Space Hotel!’

‘Who’s they, Mr President, sir?’ said Showler.

‘Don’t talk so much and let me think,’ said the President.

There were a few moments of silence. Showler waited tensely. So did Shanks and Shuckworth. So did the managers and assistant managers and desk-clerks and waitresses and bell-boys and chambermaids and pastry chefs and hall porters. And down in the huge Control Room at Houston, one hundred controllers sat motionless in front of their dials and monitors, waiting to see what orders the President would give next to the astronauts.

‘I’ve just thought of something,’ said the President. ‘Don’t you have a television camera up there on the front of your spacecraft, Showler?’

‘Sure do, Mr President.’

‘Then switch it on, you nit, and let all of us down here get a look at this object!’

‘I never thought of that,’ said Showler. ‘No wonder you’re the President. Here goes …’ He reached out and switched on the TV camera in the nose of the spacecraft, and at that moment, five

hundred million people all over the world who had been listening in on their radios rushed to their television sets.

On their screens they saw exactly what Shuckworth and Shanks and Showler were seeing — a weird glass box in splendid orbit around the earth, and inside the box, seen not too clearly but seen none the less, were seven grown-ups and one small boy and a big double bed, all floating. Three of the grown-ups were barelegged and wearing nightshirts. And far off in the distance, beyond the glass box, the TV watchers could see the enormous, glistening, silvery shape of Space Hotel 'U.S.A.'

But it was the sinister glass box itself that everyone was staring at, and the cargo of sinister creatures inside it — eight astronauts so tough and strong they didn't even bother to wear space-suits. Who were these people and where did they come from? And what in heaven's name was that big evil-looking thing disguised as a double bed? The President had said it was a bomb and he was probably right. But what were they going to do with it? All across America and Canada and Russia and Japan and India and China and Africa and England and France and Germany and everywhere else in the world a kind of panic began to take hold of the television watchers.

'Keep well clear of them, Showler!' ordered the President over the radio link.

'Sure will, Mr President!' Showler answered. 'I sure will!'

Ruimtehotel VSA

Meneer Wonka se Groot Glashyser is nie die enigste ding wat op hierdie oomblik om die Aarde wentel nie. Die Verenigde State van Amerika het twee dae gelede sy ivrste Ruimtehotel met groot sukses gelanseer. Hierdie ivusagtige, worsvormige kapsule is 'n hele eenduisend voet lank, dit word Ruimtehotel VSA genoem en word as die grootste wonder van die ruimte-eeu beskou. Dit bevat 'n tennisbaan, 'n swembad, 'n gimnasium, 'n speelkamer vir kinders en seshonderd luukse kamers, el keen met sy eie badkamer. Dit het lugreëling. Dit is ook toegerus met 'n swaartekragmasjien sodat jy nie binne-in rond hoef te sweef nie. Jy kan normaalweg loop.
Hierdie buitengewone voorwerp jaag nou op 'n hoogte
van 240 myl om en om die Aarde. Gaste word op-en afgeneem deur 'n taxidiens van klein kapsules wat elke imr op die uur vanaf Kaap Kennedy gelanseer word, van Maandae tot Vrydae. Maar tot dusver

was daar nog niemand aan boord nie, nie eens 'n ruimtevaarder nie. Die rede hiervoor is dat niemand regtig geglo het só 'n I'lmrme ding kan van die grond af kom sonder om te ontplof nie.

Maar die lansering was 'n groot sukses en noudat die Ruimtehotel veilig in 'n wentelbaan is, is daar 'n groot geskarrel om die eerste gaste soontoe te stuur. Volgens gerugte gaan die President van die Verenigde State self een van die eerstes wees wat in die hotel bly en allerhande ander mense van regoor die wêreld is natuurlik nou ywerig besig om kamers te bespreek. Verskeie konings en koninginne het die Withuis in Washington gekontak vir besprekings en 'n miljoenêr van Texas genaamd Orson Cart, wat op trou staan met 'n Hollywood-ster genaamd Helen Highwater, het eenhonderd duisend dollar 'n dag vir die wittebroodsuitë'aangebied.

Maar jy kan nie gaste na 'n hotel toe stuur tensy daar mense is wat na hulle sal omsien nie, en dit verklaar hoekom daar op hierdie oomblik nóg 'n interessante voorwerp om die Aarde wentel. Dit is die yslike Vervoerkapsule met al die Ruimtehotel VSA se personeel. Daar is bestuurders, assistentbestuurders, ontvangsklerke, kelnerinne, hoteljoggies, kamermeisies, kokke en portiers. Die kapsule waarin hulle reis, word beman deur die drie beroemde ruimtevaarders Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier, al drie aantreklik, intelligent en dapper.

"Oor presies 'n uur," sê Shuckworth, wat met die passasiers oor die luidspreker praat, "sal ons koppel met Ruimtehotel VSA, julle gelukkige tuiste vir die volgende tien jaar. En as julle reguit vorentoe kyk, behoort julle daardie manjifieke ruimteskip nou enige oomblik te sien. Aha! Ek sien iets daar! Dit moet hy wees, mense! Daar's definitief iets daar voor ons!"

Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier, sowel as al die bestuurders, assistentbestuurders, ontvangsklerke,
kelnerinne, hoteljoggies, kamermeisies, kokke en porfiers staar opgewonde deur die vensters. Shuckworth skiet 'n paar klein vuurpyle af sodat die kapsule moet spoed optel en hulle begin die ander tuig inhaal.

"Haai!" skree Showier. "Dis nie ons Ruimtehotel
nie!"

"Ruimterotte!" gil Shanks. "Wat in die naam van
Nebukadnesar is dit daai?"

"Gou! Gee vir my die teleskoop!" skree Shuckworth. Met sy een hand fokus hy die teleskoop en met die ander skakel hy die radioverbinding met Grondbeheer aan.

"Hallo, Houston!" gil hy in die mikrofoon, "Daar's iets vreemds aan die gang hier bo! Daar wentel 'n ding liier voor ons wat nie lyk soos enige ruimteskip wat ek al ooit gesien het nie, en dis 'n feit!"

“Beskryf dit vir ons,” beveel Grondbeheer in
Houston.
“Dis … dis van glas gemaak en dis soort van vierkantig en daar’s baie mense binne-in! Hulle dryf almal soos visse in ’n tenk rond!”
“ Hoeveel ruimtevaarders is aan boord?”
“Nie een nie,” sê Shukworth. “Hulle kan onmoontlik nie ruimtevaarders wees nie.”
“Wat laat jou so sê?”
“Want ten minste drie van hulle dra nagklere!” “Moenie laf wees nie, Shuckworth!” bulder Grondbeheer. “Rukjou reg, man! Dis ’n ernstige saak!”
“Ek sweer dis waar!” gil arme Shuckworth. “Drie van hulle dra nagklere! Twee ou vrouens en een ou man! Ek kan hulle duidelik sien! Ek kan selfs hul gesigte sien! Maggies, hulle’s ouer as Moses! Hulle’s omtrent negentig jaar oud!”
“Jy’s van jou kop af, Shuckworth!” gil Grondbeheer. “Jy’s afgedank! Laat my met Shanks praat!”
“Shanks hier,” sê Shanks. “Luister, Houston. Daar’s drie stokou fossiele in nagklere wat in ’n vreemde glaskas rondsweef en daar’s ’n snaakse klein mannetjie met ’n gepunte bokbaardjie wat ’n swart pluiskeil dra en ’n pruimkleurige swaelstertbaadjie en ’n bottelgroen broek

“Stop!” skree Grondbeheer.
“Dis nie al nie,” sê Shanks. “Daar’s ’n seun ook, omtrent so tien jaar oud …”
“Dis nie ’n seun nie, jou idioot!” gil Grondbeheer. “Dis ’n ruimtevaarder in vermomming! Dis ’n dwergruimtevaarder wat soos ’n seun aangetrek is! Daardie oumense is ook ruimtevaarders! Hulle is almal vermom!”
“Maar wie is hulle?” skree Shanks.
“Hoe de joos moet ons weet?” sê Grondbeheer. “Is hulle op pad na ons Ruimtehotel toe?”
“Dis presies waarheen hulle op pad is!” antwoord
Shanks. “Ek kan die Ruimtehotel nou sien. Dis omtrent
’n myl voor ons.”
“Hulle gaan dit opblaas!” gil Grondbeheer. “Dis ’n ramp! Dis ’n …” Skielik word sy stem afgesny en Shanks hoor ’n ander stem in sy oorfone. Die stem is diep en heserig.
“Ek sal beheer oorneem,” sê die diep, heserige stem. “Is jy daar, Shanks?”
“Natuurlik is ek hier,” sê Shanks. “Hoe durf jy ons onderbreek? Hou jou neus hieruit. Wie’s jy in elk geval?”
“Ek is die President van die Verenigde State,” sê die
Mem.

“En ek is die towenaar van Oz,” sê Shanks. “Dink jy ek val vir jou grappie?”

“Basra bogpraat, Shanks,” snou die President hom toe. “Dit is ’n nasionale noodtoestand hierdie!”
“Goeie genugtig!” sê Shanks en draai na Shuckworth en Showier. “Dit is regtig die President. Dis President Gilligrass self … Wei, goeiedag, Meneer die President, meneer. Hoe gaan dit vandag met u?”
“Hoeveel mense is daar in die glaskapsule?” vra die
President heserig.
“Agt ,” sc Shanks. “En almal dryf.”
“Dryf!”
“()ns is só ver van die Aarde af dat hier geen swaartekrag is nie, Meneer die President. Alles dryf hier. Ons sou ook rondgedryi het as ons nie vasgegordel was nie. Weet u dit nie?”
“Natuurlik weet ek dit,” sê die President. “Wat kan jy my nóg van daardie glaskapsule vertel?”
“Daar’s ’n bed in,” sê Shanks, “’n Groot dubbelbed, en dit dryf ook in die lug.”
“’n Bed!” blaf die President. “Wie’t nou al ooit gehoor van ’n bed in ’n ruimtetuig!”
“Ek sweer dis ’n bed,” sê Shanks.
“Jy’s die kluts kwyt, Shanks,” kondig die President aan. “Van jou verstand, jou trollie en jou wysie af. Laat my met Showier praat!”
“Showier hier, President,” sê Showier en neem die mikrofoon by Shanks. “Dis ’n groot eer om met u te kan praat, Meneer die President, meneer.”
“Man, hou jou mond!” sê die President. “Sê net vir my wat jy sien.”
“Dis beslis ’n bed, Meneer die President. Ek kan dit deur my teleskoop sien. Daar’s lakens en komberse en ’n matras …”
“Dis nie ’n bed nie, jou nikswerd niksnuts!” gil die
President. “Kan jy nie verstaan dis oëverblindery nie? Dis
’n bom. Dis ’n bom vermom as ’n bed! Hulle gaan ons manjifieke Ruimtehotel in die lug op blaas!”
“Wie’s hulle, Meneer die President, meneer?” vra
Showier.
“Moenie so baie praat nie. Ek wil dink,” sê die
President.
Daar is ’n paar oomblikke stilte. Showier wag gespanne.
So ook Shanks en Shuckworth. So ook die bestuurders en assistentbestuurders, ontvangsklerke, kelnerinne, hoteljoggies, kamermeisies, kokke en portiers. En doer onder in Houston se reusagtige Beheersentrum sit eenhonderd kontroleurs bewegingloos voor hul

wyserplate en monitors en wag om te sien watter bevele ilie President volgende vir die ruimtevaarders gaan gee.
“Ek het nou net aan iets gedink,” sê die President. “Het liille nie ’n televisiekamera daarvoor aan julie ruimteskip
!tie, Showier?”
“Ons het, Meneer die President.”
“Nou skakel dit dan aan, jou stommerik, sodat die res van ons hier onder daardie voorwerp ook kan sien!”
“Ek het nooit daaraan gedink nie,” sê Showier. “G’n
wonder u is die President nie. Hier gaan ons …” Hy lain vorentoe en skakel die TV-kamera voor in die ruimteskip se neus aan en op daardie oomblik hardloop M’shonderd miljoen mense regoor die wêreld wat oor
1ml radio’s ingeluister het na hul televisiestelle toe.
()p hul skerms sien hulle presies wat Shuckworth en Sluinks en Showier sien - ’n eienaardige glaskas wat iiisiig om die Aarde wentel en binne-in die glaskas, nie te duidelik sigbaar nie maar nietemin, is daar sewe volwassenes en een seun en ’n groot dubbelbed, en almal sweef in die lug. Drie van die volwassenes se bene is kaal en hang by hul nagkabaaie uit. En ver op die agtergrond, verby die glaskas, sien die TV-kykers die enormegroot, glinsterende silwer vorm van Ruimtehotel VSA.
Maar almal staar net na die onheilspellende glaskas fiu I ieonheilspellendewesensbinne-in-agt ruimtevaarders wat so sterk en taai is dat hulle hul nie eens verwerdig om niiintepakke te dra nie. Wie is daardie mense en waar korn hulle vandaan? En wat in hemelsnaam is daardie boo.saardige ding wat soos ’n dubbelbed vermom is? Die President hot gese dis ’n bom en hy was heel moontlik reg. Maar wat gaan hulle daarinee doen? Regoor Amerika
en Kanada en Rusland en Japan en Indië en China en Afrika en Engeland en Frankryk en Duitsland en op al die ander plekke oral in die wêreld begin ’n soort paniek die televisiekykers beetpak.
“Bly weg van hulle af, Showier!” beveel die President oor die radioverbinding.
“Maak so, Meneer die President!” antwoord Showier. “Maak beslis sol”

The Link-Up

Inside the Great Glass Elevator there was also a good deal of excitement. Charlie and Mr Wonka and all the others could see clearly the huge silvery shape of Space Hotel ‘U.S.A.’ about a mile ahead of them. And behind them was the smaller (but still pretty enormous) Transport Capsule. The Great Glass Elevator (not looking at all great

now beside these two monsters) was in the middle. And of course everybody, even Grandma Josephine, knew very well what was going on. They even knew that the three astronauts in charge of the Transport Capsule were called Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler. The whole world knew about these things. Newspapers and television had been shouting about almost nothing else for the past six months. Operation Space Hotel was the event of the century.

'What a load of luck!' cried Mr Wonka. 'We've landed ourselves slap in the middle of the biggest space operation of all time!'

'We've landed ourselves in the middle of a nasty mess,' said Grandma Josephine. 'Turn back at once!'

'No, Grandma,' said Charlie. 'We've got to watch it now. We must see the Transport Capsule linking up with the Space Hotel.'

Mr Wonka floated right up close to Charlie. 'Let's beat them to it, Charlie,' he whispered. 'Let's get there first and go aboard the Space Hotel ourselves!'

Charlie gaped. Then he gulped. Then he said softly, 'It's impossible. You've got to have all sorts of special gadgets to link up with another spacecraft, Mr Wonka.'

'My Elevator could link up with a crocodile if it had to,' said Mr Wonka. 'Just leave it to me, my boy!'

'Grandpa Joe!' cried Charlie. 'Did you hear that? We're going to link up with the Space Hotel and go on board!'

'Yippeeeeee!' shouted Grandpa Joe. 'What a brilliant thought, sir! What a staggering idea!' He grabbed Mr Wonka's hand and started shaking it like a thermometer.

'Be quiet, you balmy old bat!' said Grandma Josephine. 'We're in a hot enough stew already. I want to go home.'

'Me, too!' said Grandma Georgina.

'What if they come after us?' said Mr Bucket, speaking for the first time.

'What if they capture us?' said Mrs Bucket.

‘What if they shoot us?’ said Grandma Georgina.

‘What if my beard were made of green spinach?’ cried Mr Wonka. ‘Bunkum and tummyrot! You’ll never get anywhere if you go about what-iffing like that. Would Columbus have discovered America if he’d said “What if I sink on the way over? What if I meet pirates? What if I never come back?” He wouldn’t even have started. We want no what-iffers around here, right, Charlie? Off we go, then. But wait … this is a very tricky manoeuvre and I’m going to need help. There are three lots of buttons we have to press all in different parts of the Elevator. I shall take those two over there, the white and the black.’ Mr Wonka made a funny blowing noise with his mouth and glided effortlessly, like a huge bird, across the Elevator to the white and black buttons, and there he hovered. ‘Grandpa Joe, sir, kindly station yourself beside that silver button there … yes, that’s the one … And you, Charlie, go up and stay floating beside that little golden button near the ceiling. I must tell you that each of these buttons fires booster rockets from different places outside the Elevator. That’s how we change direction. Grandpa Joe’s rockets turn us to starboard, to the right. Charlie’s turn us to port, to the left. Mine make us go higher or lower or faster or slower. All ready?’

‘No! Wait!’ cried Charlie, who was floating exactly midway between the floor and the ceiling. ‘How do I get up? I can’t get up to the ceiling!’ He was thrashing his arms and legs violently, like a drowning swimmer, but getting nowhere.

‘My dear boy,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘You can’t swim in this stuff. It isn’t water, you know. It’s air and very thin air at that. There’s nothing to push against. So you have to use jet propulsion. Watch me. First, you take a deep breath, then you make a small round hole with your mouth and you blow as hard as you can. If you blow downward, you jet-propel yourself up. If you blow to the left, you shoot off to the right and so on. You manoeuvre yourself like a spacecraft, but using your mouth as a booster rocket.’

Suddenly everyone began practising this business of flying about, and the whole Elevator was filled with the blowings and snortings of the passengers. Grandma Georgina, in her red flannel nightgown with two skinny bare legs sticking out of the bottom, was trumpeting and spitting like a rhinoceros and flying from one side of the Elevator to the other, shouting ‘Out of my way! Out of my way!’ and crashing into poor Mr and Mrs Bucket with terrible speed. Grandpa George and

Grandma Josephine were doing the same. And well may you wonder what the millions of people down on earth were thinking as they watched these crazy happenings on their television screens. You must realize they couldn't see things very clearly. The Great Glass Elevator was only about the size of a grapefruit on their screens, and the people inside, slightly blurred through the glass, were no bigger than the pips of the grapefruit. Even so, the watchers below could see them buzzing about wildly like insects in a glass box.

'What in the world are they doing?' shouted the President of the United States, staring at the screen.

'Looks like some kind of a wardance, Mr President,' answered astronaut Showler over the radio.

'You mean they're Red Indians!' said the President.

'I didn't say that, sir.'

'Oh, yes you did, Showler.'

'Oh, no I didn't, Mr President.'

'Silence!' said the President. 'You're muddling me up.'

Back in the Elevator, Mr Wonka was saying, 'Please! Please! Do stop flying about! Keep still everybody so we can get on with the docking!'

'You miserable old mackerel!' said Grandma Georgina, sailing past him. 'Just when we start having a bit of fun, you want to stop it!'

'Look at me, everybody!' shouted Grandma Josephine. 'I'm flying! I'm a golden eagle!'

'I can fly faster than any of you!' cried Grandpa George, whizzing round and round, his nightgown billowing out behind him like the tail of a parrot.

'Grandpa George!' cried Charlie. 'Do please calm down. If we don't hurry, those astronauts will get there before us. Don't you want to see inside the Space Hotel, any of you?'

'Out of my way!' shouted Grandma Georgina, blowing herself back and forth. 'I'm a jumbo jet!'

‘You’re a balmy old bat!’ said Mr Wonka.

In the end, the old people grew tired and out of breath, and everyone settled quietly into a floating position.

‘All set, Charlie and Grandpa Joe, sir?’ said Mr Wonka.

‘All set, Mr Wonka,’ Charlie answered, hovering near the ceiling.

‘I’ll give the orders,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘I’m the pilot. Don’t fire your rockets until I tell you. And don’t forget who is who. Charlie, you’re port. Grandpa Joe, you’re starboard.’ Mr Wonka pressed one of his own two buttons and immediately booster rockets began firing underneath the Great Glass Elevator. The Elevator leaped forward, but swerved violently to the right. ‘Hard a-port!’ yelled Mr Wonka. Charlie pressed his button. His rockets fired. The Elevator swung back into line. ‘Steady as you go!’ cried Mr Wonka. ‘Starboard ten degrees! … Steady! … Steady! … Keep her there! …’

Soon they were hovering directly underneath the tail of the enormous silvery Space Hotel. ‘You see that little square door with the bolts on it?’ said Mr Wonka. ‘That’s the docking entrance. It won’t be long now … Port a fraction! … Steady! … Starboard a bit! … Good … Good … Easy does it … we’re nearly there …’

To Charlie, it felt rather as though he were in a tiny row-boat underneath the stern of the biggest ship in the world. The Space Hotel towered over them. It was enormous. ‘I can’t wait,’ thought Charlie, ‘to get inside and see what it’s like.’

Die koppeling

In die Groot Glashyser heers daar ook groot opwinding. Charlie en meneer Wonka en al die ander sien Ruimtehotel VSA se reuse silwer vorm duidelik nmtivnt ’n myl voor hulle. En agter hulle is die kleiner (maar nog steeds taamlik tamaaie) Vervoerkapsule. Die I hoot Glashyser (wat tussen hierdie twee monsters glad me meer groot lyk nie) is in die middel. En natuurlik weet almal, selfs ouma Josephine, baie goed wat aangaan. Hulle weet selfs die drie ruimtevaarders in beheer van dit* Vervoerkapsule se name is Shuckworth, Shanks en
SI ii wler. Die hele wêreld weet dit. Koerante en die televisie Kiuin nou al die afgelope ses maande onophoudelik daamor te kere. Operasie Ruimtehotel is die gebeurtenis van die ecu.

“Wat ’n geluk!” roep meneer Wonka uit. “Ons het reg in die middel van die grootste ruimte-operasie van alle tye beland!”
“Ons hot in die middel van die grootste gemors beland,”
sê ouma Josephine. “Draai dadelik om!”
“Nee, Ouma,” sê Charlie. “Ons moet kyk hoe hulle dit doen. Ons moet sien lioe koppel die Vervoerkapsule met die Ruimtehotel.”
Meneer Wonka sweef tot by Charlie. “Kom ons spring hulle voor, Charlie,” fluister hy. “Kom ons kom eerste daar en gaan aan boord van die Ruimtehotel!”
Charlie snak. Dan sluk hy. Dan sê hy sag: “Dis
onmoontlik. ’n Mens het allerhande spesiale goeters nodig as jy met ’n ander ruimteskip wil koppel, meneer Wonka.”
“My Glashyser kan met ’n krokodil koppel as dit nodig
is,” sê meneer Wonka. “Laat dit maar net aan my oor, ou seun!”
“Oupa Joe!” skree Charlie. “Hoor Oupa dit? Ons gaan
met die Ruimtehotel koppel en aan boord gaan!” “Jippieeeeee!” gil oupa Joe. “Wat ’n briljante gedagte,
meneer! Wat ’n skitterende idee!” Hy gryp meneer
Wonka se hand en begin dit soos ’n koorspen skud.
“Siejy stilbly, jou kens ou kraai!” sê ouma Josephine. “Ons is al klaar diep genoeg in die pekel. Ek wil huis toe gaan.”
“Ek ook!” sê ouma Georgina.
“Maar sê nou hulle agtervolg ons?” praat meneer Bucket vir die eerste keer.
“Sê nou hulle vang ons?” sê mevrou Bucket. “Sê nou hulle skiet ons?” sê ouma Georgina.
“Sê nou my bokbaardjie is van groen spinasie gemaak?”
lag meneer Wonka. “Twak, snert en strooi! Julle sal nooit nêrens kom met julle ge-sênou nie. Sou Columbus Amerika ontdek het as hy gesê het: ‘Sê nou my skip sink op pad soontoe? Sê nou seerowers val my aan? Sê nou ek kom nooit terug nie?’ Hy sou sy reis nooit eers aangepak het nie. Ons soek nie enige sênouers hier nie, reg Charlie? Nou toe, weg is 011s. Maar wag … Dis ’n baie moeilike maneuver hierdie en ek gaan hulp nodig
he. Daar is drie stelle knoppies wat ons op verskillende plekke in die hyser moet druk. Ek sal hierdie twee hier druk, die witte en die swarte.” Meneer Wonka maak ’n snaakse blaasgeluid met sy mond en gly geluidloos soos ’n yslike voël deur die hyser tot by die wit en swart knoppies en bly daar in die lug hang.

“Oupa Joe, neem asseblief posisie in langs daardie silwer knoppie daar … Ja, daardie een … En jy, Charlie, gaan op en hly hang daar by daardie goue knoppie naby die dak. I I’ moet net verduidelik: elkeen van hierdie knoppies hkicM aanjaagvuurpyle van verskillende plekke

buitekant die hyser af. Dis hoe ons van koers gaan verander. Oupa Joe se vuurpyle laat ons na stuurboord toe draai, dit wil sc rcgsom. Charlie s'n laat ons bakboord toe draai, met
ander woorde linksom. Myne laat ons hoër of laer of
vinniger of stadiger vlieg. Almal gereed?"
"Nee! Wag!" skree Charlie, wat net mooi halfpad tussen die vloer en die dak sweef. "Hoe kom ek bo? Ek kan nie by dio dik uitkom nie!" Hy swaai sy arms en bene woes Niios k-maml wat verdrink, maar hy kom nêrens nie.
"My liewe seun," sê meneer Wonka, "jy kan nie hierwil ílrnn nit'. Jy'.s trios nie in die water nie. Jy's in die lug, en dis
boonop baie dun lug. Daar is niks om teen te druk nie, so jy moet straalaandrywing gebruik. Hou my dop. Jy asem eers diep in, dan maak jy 'n klein ronde gaatjie met jou mond en blaas so hard as wat jy kan. As jy ondertoe blaas, skiet jy jouself boontoe. As jy na links blaas, skiet jy na regs en so aan. Jy maneuvreer jouself soos 'n ruimteskip, en jy gebruik jou mond as 'n aanjaagvuurpyl."
Almal begin dadelik oefen om rond te vlieg en die hele hyser word gevul met die passasiers se geblaas en gesnuif. Ouma Georgina, in haar rooi flennienagrok met twee kaal spykerbeentjies wat onder uitsteek, trompetter en spoeg soos 'n renoster en vlieg van die een kant van die hyser na die ander kant. Sy skree: "Uit my pad! Uit my pad!" en vlieg dan teen 'n geweldige spoed in arme meneer en mevrou Bucket vas. En jy wonder seker wat dink die miljoene mense onder op die Aarde terwyl hulle hierdie vreemde storie op hul televisieskerms aanskou. Jy moet onthou hulle kan niks duidelik sien nie. Die Groot Glashyser is omtrent maar so groot soos 'n pomelo op hul skerms en die mense binne-in is effens dof agter die glas en niks groter as die pomelo se pitte nie. Maar nogtans kan die kykers doer onder sien hoe hulle wild rondzoem soos insekte in 'n glaskas.
"Wat de ongeluk doen hulle?" gil die President van die
Verenigde State terwyl hy na die skerm staar.
"Lyk soos 'n soort oorlogsdans, Meneer die President,"
antwoord ruimtevaarder Showier oor die radio.
"Jy bedoel hulle is Rooi Indiane?" vra die President. "Ek het nie so gesê nie, meneer."
"O ja, jy het, Showier."
"O nee, ek het nie, Meneer die President."
"Stilte!" beveel die President. "Jy maak my deurmekaar."
'n Ent verder sê meneer Wonka in die hyser: "Asseblief! Asseblief! Hou op om so rond te vlieg! Word nou net mstig sodat ons kan begin vasmeer!"
"Jou mislike misbaksel!" sê ouma Georgina en seil verby limn. "Nes ons dit begin geniet, wil jy ons stop!"

“Kyk vir my, almal!” roep ouma Josephine. “Ek vlieg!
Ek is ’n goue arend!”
“Ek vlieg vinniger as julle almal!” skree oupa George en sirkel óm en óm sodat sy naghemp soos ’n papegaai se siert agter hom aan fladder.
“Oupa George!” gil Charlie. “Bedaar asseblief. As ons nie gou maak nie, gaan daardie ruimtevaarders voor ons daar wees. Wil Oupa nie sien hoe die Ruimtehotel van binne lyk nie?”
“Uit my pad!” skree ouma Georgina en blaas haarself
I icon en weer. “Ek’s ’n superstraler!”
“U’s ’n kens ou kraai!” sê meneer Wonka.
Maar later raak die oumense moeg en uitasem en almal kom in ’n swewende posisie totbedaring.
“Gereed, Charlie en Oupa Joe?” vra meneer Wonka. “Gereed, meneer Wonka,” antwoord Charlie, wat naby
die dak hang.
“Ek gee die bevele,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ek is die vlieënier. Moenie julle vuurpyle afvuur voor ek so sê nie. ln moenie vergeet wie is wie nie. Charlie, jy is bakboord. Oupa Joe, u is stuurboord.” Meneer Wonka druk een van sy eie knoppies en die aanjaagvuurpyle ontbrand Onmiddellik onder die Groot Glashyser. Die hyser skiet vorentoe, maar swenk wild na regs. “Bakboord!” gil meneer Wonka. Charlie druk sy knoppie. Sy vuurpyle ontbrand. Die hyser vlieg weer reguit. “Versigtig nou!” skree meneer Wonka. “Stuurboord, tien grade! …

Versigtig!… Versigtig! … Hou dit so!…”
k’nrt daarna hang hulle reg onder die enorme silwer
Ruimtehotel se stert.
“Sien julle daardie vierkantige deurtjie met die boute?” via meneer Wonka. “Dis die vasmeeringang. Dis nou nil-meer lank nie … ’n Fraksie meer na bakboord! … Versigtig!… ’n Bietjie na stuurboord!… Goed … Goed … Buie versigtig nou … Ons is amper daar …”
I)ii voel vir Charlie of hy in ’n klein roeibootjie onder
die boegvan die wêreld se grootste skip is. Die Ruimtehotel toring bo hulle nit. Dit is absoluut reusagtig. “Ek kan nie wag nie,” dink Charlie. “Ek wil sien hoe dit binnekant lyk,”

The President

Half a mile back, Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler were keeping the television camera aimed all the time at the Glass Elevator. And across the world, millions and millions of people were clustered around their TV screens, watching tensely the drama being acted out two hundred and forty miles above the earth. In his study in the White House sat Lancelot R. Gilligrass, President of the United States of America, the

most powerful man on Earth. In this moment of crisis, all his most important advisers had been summoned urgently to his presence, and there they all were now, following closely on the giant television screen every move made by this dangerous-looking glass capsule and its eight desperate-looking astronauts. The entire Cabinet was present. The Chief of the Army was there, together with four other generals. There was the Chief of the Navy and the Chief of the Air Force and a sword-swallower from Afghanistan, who was the President's best friend. There was the President's Chief Financial Adviser, who was standing in the middle of the room trying to balance the budget on top of his head, but it kept falling off. Standing nearest of all to the President was the Vice-President, a huge lady of eighty-nine with a whiskery chin. She had been the President's nurse when he was a baby and her name was Miss Tibbs. Miss Tibbs was the power behind the throne. She stood no nonsense from anyone. Some people said she was as strict with the President now as when he was a little boy. She was the terror of the White House and even the Head of the Secret Service broke into a sweat when summoned to her presence. Only the President was allowed to call her Nanny. The President's famous cat, Mrs Taubsypuss, was also in the room.

There was absolute silence now in the Presidential study. All eyes were riveted on the TV screen as the small glass object, with its booster-rockets firing, slid smoothly up behind the giant Space Hotel.

'They're going to link up!' shouted the President. 'They're going on board our Space Hotel!'

'They're going to blow it up!' cried the Chief of the Army. 'Let's blow them up first, crash bang wallop bang-bang-bang-bang.' The Chief of the Army was wearing so many medal-ribbons they covered the entire front of his tunic on both sides and spread down on to his trousers as well. 'Come on, Mr P.,' he said. 'Let's have some really super-duper explosions!'

'Silence, you silly boy!' said Miss Tibbs, and the Chief of the Army slunk into a corner.

'Listen,' said the President. 'The point is this. Who are they? And where do they come from? Where's my Chief Spy?'

'Here, sir, Mr President, sir!' said the Chief Spy.

He had a false moustache, a false beard, false eyelashes, false teeth

and a falsetto voice.

‘Knock-Knock,’ said the President.

‘Who’s there?’ said the Chief Spy.

‘Courteney.’

‘Courteney who?’

‘Courteney one yet?’ said the President.

There was a brief silence. ‘The President asked you a question,’ said Miss Tibbs in an icy voice. ‘Have you Courteney one yet?’

‘No, ma’am, not yet,’ said the Chief Spy, beginning to twitch.

‘Well, here’s your chance,’ snarled Miss Tibbs.

‘Quite right,’ said the President. ‘Tell me immediately who those people are in that glass capsule!’

‘Ah-ha,’ said the Chief Spy, twirling his false moustache. ‘That is a very difficult question.’

‘You mean you don’t know?’

‘I mean I do know, Mr President. At least I think I know. Listen. We have just launched the finest hotel in the world. Right?’

‘Right!’

‘And who is so madly jealous of this wonderful hotel of ours that he wants to blow it up?’

‘Miss Tibbs,’ said the President.

‘Wrong,’ said the Chief Spy. ‘Try again.’

‘Well,’ said the President, thinking deeply. ‘In that case, could it not perhaps be some other hotel owner who is envious of our lovely hotel?’

‘Brilliant!’ cried the Chief Spy. ‘Go on, sir! You’re getting warm!’

'It's Mr Savoy!' said the President.

'Warmer and warmer, Mr President!'

'Mr Ritz!'

'You're hot, sir! You're boiling hot! Go on!'

'I've got it!' cried the President. 'It's Mr Hilton!'

'Well done, sir!' said the Chief Spy.

'Are you sure it's him?'

'Not sure, but it's certainly a warm possibility, Mr President. After all, Mr Hilton's got hotels in just about every country in the world but he hasn't got one in space. And we have. He must be madder than a maggot!'

'By gum, we'll soon fix this!' snapped the President, grabbing one of the eleven telephones on his desk. 'Hello!' he said into the phone. 'Hello hello hello! Where's the operator?' He jiggled furiously on the little thing you jiggle when you want the operator. 'Operator, where are you?'

'They won't answer you now,' said Miss Tibbs. 'They're all watching television.'

'Well, this one'll answer!' said the President, snatching up a bright red telephone. This was the hot line direct to the Premier of Soviet Russia in Moscow. It was always open and only used in terrible emergencies. 'It's just as likely to be the Russians as Mr Hilton,' the President went on. 'Don't you agree, Nanny?'

'It's bound to be the Russians,' said Miss Tibbs.

'Premier Yugetoff speaking,' said the voice from Moscow. 'What's on your mind, Mr President?'

'Knock-Knock,' said the President.

'Who's there?' said the Soviet Premier.

‘Warren.’

‘Warren who?’

‘Warren Peace by Leo Tolstoy,’ said the President. ‘Now see here, Yugetoff! You get those astronauts of yours off that Space Hotel of ours this instant! Otherwise, I’m afraid we’re going to have to show you just where you get off, Yugetoff!’

‘Those astronauts are not Russians, Mr President.’

‘He’s lying,’ said Miss Tibbs.

‘You’re lying,’ said the President.

‘Not lying, sir,’ said Premier Yugetoff. ‘Have you looked closely at those astronauts in the glass box? I myself cannot see them too clearly on my TV screen, but one of them, the little one with the pointed beard and the top hat, has a distinctly Chinese look about him. In fact, he reminds me very much of my friend the Prime Minister of China …’

‘Great garbage!’ cried the President, slamming down the red phone and picking up a porcelain one. The porcelain phone went direct to the Head of the Chinese Republic in Peking.

‘Hello hello hello!’ said the President.

‘Wing’s Fish and Vegetable Store in Shanghai,’ said a small distant voice. ‘Mr Wing speaking.’

‘Nanny!’ cried the President, banging down the phone. ‘I thought this was a direct line to the Premier!’

‘It is,’ said Miss Tibbs. ‘Try again.’

The President picked up the receiver. ‘Hello!’ he yelled.

‘Mr Wong speaking,’ said a voice at the other end.

‘Mister Who?’ screamed the President.

‘Mr Wong, assistant stationmaster, Chungking, and if you asking about ten o’clock tlain, ten o’clock tlain no lunning today. Boiler burst.’

The President threw the phone across the room at the Postmaster General. It hit him in the stomach. ‘What’s the matter with this thing?’ shouted the President.

‘It is very difficult to phone people in China, Mr President,’ said the Postmaster General. ‘The country’s so full of Wings and Wongs, every time you wing you get the wong number.’

‘You’re not kidding,’ said the President.

The Postmaster General replaced the telephone on the desk. ‘Try it just once more, Mr President, please,’ he said. ‘I’ve tightened the screws underneath.’

The President again picked up the receiver.

‘Gleetings, honourable Mr Plesident,’ said a soft faraway voice. ‘Here is Assistant-Plemier Chu-On-Dat speaking. How can I do for you?’

‘Knock-Knock,’ said the President.

‘Who der?’

‘Ginger.’

‘Ginger who?’

‘Ginger yourself much when you fell off the Great Wall of China?’ said the President. ‘Okay, Chu-On-Dat. Let me speak to Premier How-Yu-Bin.’

‘Much regret Plemier How-Yu-Bin not here just this second, Mr Plesident.’

‘Where is he?’

‘He outside mending a puncture on his bicycle.’

‘Oh no he isn’t,’ said the President. ‘You can’t fool me, you crafty old mandarin! At this very minute he’s boarding our magnificent Space Hotel with seven other rascals to blow it up!’

‘Excuse pleese, Mr Plesident. You make big mistake …’

‘No mistake!’ barked the President. ‘And if you don’t call them off right away I’m going to tell my Chief of the Army to blow them all sky high! So chew on that, Chu-On-Dat!’

‘Hooray!’ said the Chief of the Army. ‘Let’s blow everyone up! Bang-bang! Bang-bang!’

‘Silence!’ barked Miss Tibbs.

‘I’ve done it!’ cried the Chief Financial Adviser. ‘Look at me, everybody! I’ve balanced the budget!’ And indeed he had. He stood proudly in the middle of the room with the enormous 200 billion dollar budget balanced beautifully on the top of his bald head. Everyone clapped. Then suddenly the voice of astronaut Shuckworth cut in urgently on the radio loudspeaker in the President’s study. ‘They’ve linked up and gone on board!’ shouted Shuckworth. ‘And they’ve taken in the bed … I mean the bomb!’

The President sucked in his breath sharply. He also sucked in a big fly that happened to be passing at the time. He choked. Miss Tibbs thumped him on the back. He swallowed the fly and felt better. But he was very angry. He seized pencil and paper and began to draw a picture. As he drew, he kept muttering, ‘I won’t have flies in my office! I won’t put up with them!’ His advisers waited eagerly. They knew that the great man was about to give the world yet another of his brilliant inventions. The last had been the Gilligrass Left-handed Corkscrew which had been hailed by left-handers across the nation as one of the greatest blessings of the century.

‘There you are!’ said the President, holding up the paper. ‘This is the Gilligrass Patent Fly-Trap!’ They all crowded round to look.

‘The fly climbs up the ladder on the left,’ said the President. ‘He walks along the plank. He stops. He sniffs. He smells something good. He peers over the edge and sees the sugar-lump. “Ah-ha!” he cries. “Sugar!” He is just about to climb down the string to reach it when he sees the basin of water below. “Ho-ho!” he says. “It’s a trap! They want me to fall in!” So he walks on, thinking what a clever fly he is. But as you see, I have left out one of the rungs in the ladder he goes down by, so he falls and breaks his neck.’

‘Tremendous, Mr President!’ they all exclaimed. ‘Fantastic! A stroke of genius!’

'I wish to order one hundred thousand for the Army immediately,' said the Chief of the Army.

'Thank you,' said the President, making a careful note of the order.

'I repeat,' said the frantic voice of Shuckworth over the loudspeaker. 'They've gone on board and taken the bomb with them!'

'Stay well clear of them, Shuckworth,' ordered the President. 'There's no point in getting your boys blown up as well.'

And now, all over the world, the millions of watchers waited more tensely than ever in front of their television sets. The picture on their screens, in vivid colour, showed the sinister little glass box securely linked up to the underbelly of the gigantic Space Hotel. It looked like some tiny baby animal clinging to its mother. And when the camera zoomed closer, it was clear for all to see that the glass box was completely empty. All eight of the desperadoes had climbed into the Space Hotel and they had taken their bomb with them.

Die President

'n Halfmyl agter hulle hou Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier die televisiekamera nog steeds op die Groot Glashyser gerig. En regoor die wêreld sit miljoene der miljoene mense voor hul TV-skerms vasgekluister en hou die drama wat tweehonderd en veertig myl bo die Aarde afspeel gespanne dop. In sy studeerkamer in die Withuis sit Lancelot R. Gilligrass, President van die Verenigde State van Amerika, die magtigste man ter wêreld. In hierdie krisisuur het hy al sy belangrikste raadgewers dringend na hom toe ontbied en hulle almal se oë is vasgenael op die yslike televisieskerm. Hulle volg elke beweging van hierdie Glashyser wat so gevaarlik lyk en sy agt ruimtevaarders wat so desperaat lyk. Die hele kabinet is teenwoordig. Die Hoof van die Leër is hier, saam met vier ander generaals. Die Hoof van die Vloot en die Hoof van die Lugmag en die President se beste vriend,
'n swaardslukker van Afganistan, is hier. Die President
se Hoof Finansiële Adviseur staan in die middel van die vertrek en probeer die begroting op sy kop balanseer, maar dit val aanhoudend af. Naaste van almal aan die President staan die Visepresident, 'n yslike nege-erv tagtigjarige dame met 'n harige ken. Sy is al die President
se oppasser vandat hy 'n baba was en haar naam is juffrou Tihhs. Juffrou Tibbs is die dryfkrag agter die troon. Sy iluld nie nonsens van

enigiemand nie. Party mense sê sy is nou nog net so streng met die President soos toe hy 'n smntjie was. Sy is die verskrikking van die Withuis en sells die Hoof van die Geheime Diens slaan in sweet uit vvanneer hy na haar toe ontbied word. Net die President mag haar Nanna noem. Die President se beroemde kat, incvrou Taubsypuss, is ook in die vertrek.
I)aar heers nou doodse stilte in die President se
Mudeerkamer. Alle oë is op die TV-skerm vasgenael terwyl die klein glasvoorwerp se aanjaagvuurpyle horn rats agter die reuse Ruimtehotel laat inglip.
"Hulle gaan koppel!" skree die President. "Hulle wil
aan boord van ons Ruimtehotel gaan!"
"Hulle gaan dit opblaas!" skree die Hoof van die Leër. "Kom ons blaas hulle eerste op, kadwarra-kadwarra- kahoem'boem-boem'boem." Die Hoof van die Leer dra so baie medaljes dat hulle die hele voorkant van sy uniform aan weerskante toemaak en boonop tot op sy broekspype ook afgaan. "Komaan, Meneer P," sê hy. "Kom ons verras hulle met 'n paar van ons hipersuper-i mtploffings!"
"Stilte, jou stuitige seun!" sê juffrou Tibbs en die Hoof
van die Leër gaan kruip in 'n hoek weg.
"Luister," sê die President. "Hoofsaak is, ons moet uitvind wie is hulle? En waar kom hulle vandaan? Waar is my I Ioofspioen?"
"Hier, meneer, Meneer die President, meneer!'' sê die
Hoofspioen.
Hy het 'n vals snor, 'n vals baard, vals ooghare, vals tamlo en 'n falsetstem.

"Tok-tok," sê die President.
"Wie's daar?" vra die Hoofspioen. "Allie."
"Allie wíe?"
"Allie vyand gevang?" vra die President.
Daar is 'n oomblik stilte. "Die President het jou 'n
vinag gevra," sê juffrou Tibbs met 'n ysige stem. "Het jy ill ilie vyand gevang?"
"Nee, geagte mejuffrou, nog nie," sê die Hoofspioen en
Iu *gin stuiptrekkings kry.
"Wei, dis nou jou kans," grom juffrou Tibbs.
" I leeltemal reg," sê die President. "Sê onmiddellik vir
II iy wie die mense in daai glaskapsule is!"
"Aha," sê die Hoofspioen en draai sy vals snor. "Dis 'n
haie moeilike vraag."
"Jy bedoel jy weet nie?"
"Ek bedoel ek weet, Meneer die President. Altans, ek dink ek weet. Die saak staan só: Ons het so pas die allerspoggerigste hotel ter wêreld

gelanseer, reg?"
"Reg!"
"En wie is so waansinnig jaloers op hierdie wonderlike hotel van ons dat hy dit wil opblaas?"
"Juffrou Tibbs," sê die President.
"Verkeerd," sê die Hoofspioen. "Probeer weer."
"Wei," sê die President, en dink diep na. "In daardie geval is dit dalk 'n ander hoteleienaar wat afgunstig op ons lieflike hotel is."
"Briljant!" roep die Hoofspioen uit. "Gaan aan, meneer!
I I word warm!"
" Dis meneer Savoy!" sê die President. "Warmer en warmer, Meneer die President!" "Meneer Ritz!"
"U is nou baie warm, meneer! U's kokend warm! Gaan
aan":
"Ek het dit!" roep die President uit. "Dis meneer
Hilton!"
"Knap gedaan, meneer!" sê die Hoofspioen. "Is jy seker dis hy?"
"Nie seker nie, maar dis sekerlik 'n sterk moontlikheid, Meneer die President. Per slot van rekening het meneer Hilton hotelle in bykans elke land ter wêreld, maar hy het nie een in die ruimte nie. En ons het. Hy moet wild van woede wees!"
"So by my kool, ons sal hierdie saak vinnig regstel!"
blaf die President en gryp een van die elf telefone op sy lessenaar. "Hallo!" sê hy in die foon. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Waar's die operateur?" Hy wikkel die ding wat jy wikkel wanneer jy die skakelbord wil hê woedend. "Skakelbord, waar is jy?"
"Hulle sal nie nou antwoord nie," sê juffrou Tibbs.
"Hulle kyk almal televisie."
"Wei, hierdie een sal antwoord!" sê die President en gryp na 'n blink rooi telefoon. Dit is die direkte blitslyn na die President van Rusland in Moskou. Die lyn word altyd oop gehou en net in verskriklike noodgevalle gebruik. "Dit kan net so maklik die Russe as meneer Hilton wees," gaan die President aan. "Stem jy nie saam nie, Nanna?"
"Dis sweerlik die Russe," sê juffrou Tibbs.
"Premier Yugetoff wat praat," sê die stem uit Moskou. "Wat het jy op die hart, Meneer die President?"
"Tok-tok," sê die President.
"Wie's daar?" sê die Russiese Premier. "Oorlog."
"Oorlog waar?"
"Oorlog en Vrede deur Leo Tolstoy," sê die President. "Luister vir my, Yugetoff! Jy kry daai ruimtevaarders van jou uit ons Ruimtehotel, nou op die daad! Anders is ek bevrees ons gaan jou 'n dure les moet leer, Yugetoff!"
"Daardie ruimtevaarders is nie Russe nie, Meneer die

President."
"Hy lieg," sê juffrou Tibbs. "Jy lieg," sê die President.
"Ek lieg nie, meneer," sê Premier Yugetoff. "Het jy al mooi na die ruimtevaarders in die glaskas gekyk? Ek persoonlik kan hulle nie te duidelik op my TV-skerm sien nie, maar een van hulle, die kleintjie met die gt-punte bokbaardjie en die pluiskeil, lyk onmiskenbaar Chinees. Om die waarheid te sê, hy herinner my baie nan my vriend, die Eerste Minister van China …"
"Goeie gemors!" skree die President. Hy smyt die rooi
foon neer en tel 'n porselein een op. Die porseleinfoon is 'n direkte verbinding met die Hoof van die Chinese Republiek in Peking.
"Hallo-hallo-hallo!" sê die President.
"Wing se vis-en groentewinkel in Sjanghai," sê 'n fyn stemmetjie ver weg. "Meneer Wing wat praat."
"Nanna!" gil die President en plak die foon neer. "Ek dog dis 'n direkte lyn na die Premier!"
"Dit is," sê juffrou Tibbs. "Probeer weer."
Die President tel die gehoorbuis op. "Hallo!" skree hy.
"Meneer Wong wat praat," sê 'n stem aan die ander
kant.
"Meneer Wie" gil die President.
"Meneer Wong, assistentstasiemeester, Chungking, en as jy van tienuul-tlein wil weet, tienuul-tlein loop nie vundag nie. Stookketel ontplof."
Die President gooi die foon oor die vertrek na die Posmeester-Generaal. Dit tref hom in die maag. "Wat makeer hierdie ding?" gil die President.
"Dis baie moeilik om mense in China te bel, Meneer die President," sê die Posmeester-Generaal. "Daar is so

baie Wings en Wongs dat 'n mens elke keer by 'n Wong uitkom as jy 'n Wing soek, en andersom."
"Nou sê jy my," sê die President.
Die Posmeester-Generaal sit die telefoon versigtig terug op die lessenaar. "Probeer asseblief net nog een keer, Meneer die President," sê hy, "ek het die skroewe onderaan stywer vasgedraai."
Die President tel die gehoorbuis weer op.
"Wees gegloed, gejeerde Meneer die Plesident," sê 'n sagte stem van ver-ver af. "Dit is Assistentplemier Kou-Da-An wat praat. Hoe kan ek vir u doen?"
"Tok-tok," sê die President.
" Wiedaar?" "Wiesie." "Wiesie wie?"
" Wie's'ie eerste een wat by die Groot Muur van China
‚iIj'.(.'spring het?" sê die President. "Toe nou, Kou-DaAn. I aat my met

President Hoe-Ga-Dit praat."
"Jammer baie, Plemier Hoe-Ga-Dit hielie oomblik nie
hie, Meneer die Plesident." "Waar is hy?"
"Buite sy fiets pap wiel legmaak."
"O nee," sê die President, "jy kan my nie uitoorlê iiii', jou slinkse ou mandaryn! Hy's op hierdie einste oomblik besig om saam met sewe ander skurke aan hoord van ons manjifieke Ruimtehotel te gaan om dit up te blaas!"
"Ekskuus assebrief, Meneer die Plesident. U maak t;loot fout…"
"Fout se voet!" knip die President hom kort. "As jy
I mile nie nou dadelik stop nie gaan ek die Hoof van my
I rcr beveel om hulle almal in die lug op te blaas! So kou ilaaraan, Kou-DaAn!"
"Hoera!" juig die Hoof van die Leër. "Kom ons blaas
Imlle flenters. Boem-boem! Boem-boem!" "Stilte!" blaf juffrou Tibbs.
"Fk het dit reggekry!" skree die Hoof Finansiële Adviseur. "Kyk vir my, almal! Ek het die begroting laat halanseer!" En hy het inderdaad. Hy staan trots in die middel van die vertrek met die enorme 200 biljoen dollar-begroting perfek op sy bles kop gebalanseer. Almal klap hande. Skielik basuin die ruimtevaarder Slnirkworth se stem dringend oor die radioluidspreker
in die President se studeerkamer. "Hulle het klaar gekoppel en gaan aan boord!" skree Shuckworth. "En hulle het die bed ingevat… Ek bedoel, die bom!"
Die President trek sy asem skerp in. En daarmee saam
ook 'n groot vlieg wat toevallig net toe verbyvlieg. Hy verstik. Juffrou Tibbs klop horn op die rug. Hy sluk die vlieg in en voel beter. Maar hy is baie kwaad. Hy gryp 'n potlood en papier en begin 'n prentjie teken. Terwyl hy teken, prewel hy aanhoudend: "Ek wil nie vlieë in my kantoor hê nie! Ek kan die goed nie verdra nie!" Sy raadgewers wag gretig. Hulle weet hierdie man der manne is op die punt om nog een van sy briljante uitvindings aan die wêreld te skenk. Die laaste een was die Gilligrass Linkerhand Kurktrekker wat linkshandiges regoor die land as een van die grootste seëninge van die eeu verwelkom het.
"Daar's hy!" sê die President en hou die papier op. "Dit
is die Gilligrass Vlieëvanger Patent!" Almal koek saam om dit te sien.
"Die vlieg klim by die leer links op," sê die President.
"Hy loop al met die plank langs. Hy gaan staan. Hy snuif. Hy ruik iets lekkers. Hy loer oor die rand en sien die suikerklontjie. Aha!' roep hy uit. 'Suiker!' Hy wil net mooi met die toutjie afklim om daarby uit te kom wanneer hy die bak water onder sien.
'Oho!' sê hy. 'Dis 'n lokval! Hulle wil hê ek moet inval!'
So hy loop verder en dink aan wat 'n slim vlieg hy is. Maar soos julle kan sien, het ek een van die leer waarmee hy afklim se sporte

uitgelaat en daarom val hy en breek sy nek."
"Voortreflik, Meneer die President!" jubel hulle almal.
"Fantasties! Absoluut geniaal!"

"Ek wil asseblief onmiddellik 'n honderdduisend vir die leër bestel," sê die Hoof van die Leër.
"Dankie," sê die President en teken die bestelling
noukeurig aan.
"Ek herhaal," sê Shuckworth se histeriese stem oor die luidspreker. "Hulle het aan boord gegaan en die bom saam met hulle geneem!"
"Bly ver van hulle af weg, Shuckworth," beveel die President. "Daar is g'n sin in om julle kêrels ook te laat ophlaas nie."
Kn nou, regoor die wêreld, wag die miljoene kykers
ilog nicer gespanne as ooit voor hul televisiestelle.
Die prentjie op hul skerms wys, in helder kleur, hoe die onheilspellende klein glaskas stewig onderaan die reusagtige Ruimtehotel se maag vasgekoppel is. Dit lyk soos 'n babadiertjie wat aan sy ma vasklou. En wanneer die kamera nader inzoem, kan almal duidelik sien die glaskas is heeltemal leeg. A1 agt booswigte het in die Ruimtehotel geklim en die bom saam met hulle geneem.

Men from Mars

There was no floating inside the Space Hotel. The gravity-making machine saw to that. So once the docking had been triumphantly achieved, Mr Wonka, Charlie, Grandpa Joe and Mr and Mrs Bucket were able to walk out of the Great Glass Elevator into the lobby of the Hotel. As for Grandpa George, Grandma Georgina and Grandma Josephine, none of them had had their feet on the ground for over twenty years and they certainly weren't going to change their habits now. So when the floating stopped, they all three plopped right back into bed again and insisted that the bed, with them in it, be pushed into the Space Hotel.

Charlie gazed around the huge lobby. On the floor there was a thick green carpet. Twenty tremendous chandeliers hung shimmering from the ceiling. The walls were covered with valuable pictures and there were big soft armchairs all over the place. At the far end of the room there were the doors of five lifts. The group stared in silence at all this luxury. Nobody dared speak. Mr Wonka had warned them that every word they uttered would be picked up by Space Control in Houston, so they had better be careful. A faint humming noise came from somewhere below the floor, but that only made the silence more spooky. Charlie took hold of Grandpa Joe's hand and held it tight. He

wasn't sure he liked this very much. They had broken into the greatest machine ever built by man, the property of the United States Government, and if they were discovered and captured as they surely must be in the end, what would happen to them then? Jail for life? Yes, or something worse.

Mr Wonka was writing on a little pad. He held up the pad. It said: ANYBODY HUNGRY?

The three old ones in the bed began waving their arms and nodding and opening and shutting their mouths. Mr Wonka turned the paper over. On the other side it said: THE KITCHENS OF THIS HOTEL ARE LOADED WITH LUSCIOUS FOOD, LOBSTERS, STEAKS, ICE-CREAM. WE SHALL HAVE A FEAST TO END ALL FEASTS.

Suddenly, a tremendous booming voice came out of a loudspeaker hidden somewhere in the room. 'ATTENTION!' boomed the voice and Charlie jumped. So did Grandpa Joe. Everybody jumped, even Mr Wonka. 'ATTENTION THE EIGHT FOREIGN ASTRONAUTS! THIS IS SPACE CONTROL IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, U.S.A.! YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON AMERICAN PROPERTY! YOU ARE ORDERED TO IDENTIFY YOURSELVES IMMEDIATELY! SPEAK NOW!'

'Ssshhh!' whispered Mr Wonka, finger to lips.

There followed a few seconds of awful silence. Nobody moved except Mr Wonka who kept saying 'Ssshhh! Ssshhh!'

'WHO … ARE … YOU?' boomed the voice from Houston, and the whole world heard it. 'I REPEAT … WHO … ARE … YOU?' shouted the urgent angry voice, and five hundred million people crouched in front of their television sets waiting for an answer to come from the mysterious strangers inside the Space Hotel. The television was not able to show a picture of these mysterious strangers. There was no camera in there to record the scene. Only the words came through. The TV watchers saw nothing but the outside of the giant hotel in orbit, photographed of course by Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler who were following behind. For half a minute the world waited for a reply.

But no reply came.

'SPEAK!' boomed the voice, getting louder and louder and ending in a fearful frightening shout that rattled Charlie's eardrums. 'SPEAK!

SPEAK! SPEAK!' Grandma Georgina shot under the sheet. Grandma Josephine stuck her fingers in her ears. Grandpa George buried his head in the pillow. Mr and Mrs Bucket, both petrified, were once again in each other's arms. Charlie was clutching Grandpa Joe's hand, and the two of them were staring at Mr Wonka and begging him with their eyes to do something. Mr Wonka stood very still, and although his face looked calm, you can be quite sure his clever inventive brain was spinning like a dynamo.

'THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE!' boomed the voice. 'WE ARE ASKING YOU ONCE MORE … WHO … ARE … YOU? REPLY IMMEDIATELY! IF YOU DO NOT REPLY WE SHALL BE FORCED TO REGARD YOU AS DANGEROUS ENEMIES. WE SHALL THEN PRESS THE EMERGENCY FREEZER SWITCH AND THE TEMPERATURE IN THE SPACE HOTEL WILL DROP TO MINUS ONE HUNDRED DEGREES CENTIGRADE. ALL OF YOU WILL BE INSTANTLY DEEP FROZEN. YOU HAVE FIFTEEN SECONDS TO SPEAK. AFTER THAT YOU WILL TURN INTO ICICLES … ONE … TWO … THREE …'

'Grandpa!' whispered Charlie as the counting continued, 'we must do something! We must! Quick!'

'SIX!' said the voice. 'SEVEN! … EIGHT! … NINE! …'

Mr Wonka had not moved. He was still gazing straight ahead, still quite cool, perfectly expressionless. Charlie and Grandpa Joe were staring at him in horror. Then, all at once, they saw the tiny twinkling wrinkles of a smile appear around the corners of his eyes. He sprang to life. He spun round on his toes, skipped a few paces across the floor and then, in a frenzied unearthly sort of scream he cried, 'FIMBO FEEZ!'

The loudspeaker stopped counting. There was silence. All over the world there was silence.

Charlie's eyes were riveted on Mr Wonka. He was going to speak again. He was taking a deep breath. 'BUNGO BUNI!' he screamed. He put so much force into his voice that the effort lifted him right up on to the tips of his toes.

'BUNGO BUNI

DAFU DUNI

YUBEE LUNI!'

Again the silence.

The next time Mr Wonka spoke, the words came out so fast and sharp and loud they were like bullets from a machine-gun. 'ZOONK-ZOONK-ZOONK-ZOONK-ZOONK!' he barked. The noise echoed around and around the lobby of the Space Hotel. It echoed around the world.

Mr Wonka now turned and faced the far end of the lobby where the loudspeaker voice had come from. He walked a few paces forward as a man would, perhaps, who wanted a more intimate conversation with his audience. And this time, the tone was much quieter, the words came more slowly, but there was a touch of steel in every syllable:

'KIRASUKU MALIBUKU,

WEEBEE WIZE UN YUBEE KUKU!

ALIPENDA KAKAMENDA,

PANTZ FORLDUN IFNO SUSPENDA!

FUIKIKA KANDERIKA,

WEEBE STRONGA YUBEE WEEKA!

POPOKOTA BORUMOKA

VERI RISKI YU PROVOKA!

KATIKATI MOONS UN STARS

FANFANISHA VENUS MARS!’

Mr Wonka paused dramatically for a few seconds. Then he took an enormous deep breath and in a wild and fearsome voice, he yelled out:

‘KITIMBIBI ZOONK!

FUMBOLEEZI ZOONK!

GUGUMIZA ZOONK!

FUMIKAKA ZOONK!

ANAPOLALA ZOONK ZOONK ZOONK!’

The effect of all this on the world below was electric. In the Control Room in Houston, in the White House in Washington, in palaces and city buildings and mountain shacks from America to China to Peru, the five hundred million people who heard that wild and fearsome voice yelling out these strange and mystic words all shivered with fear before their television sets. Everybody began turning to everybody else and saying, ‘Who are they? What language was that? Where do they come from?’

In the President’s study in the White House, Vice-President Tibbs, the members of the Cabinet, the Chiefs of the Army and the Navy and the Air Force, the sword-swallower from Afghanistan, the Chief Financial Adviser and Mrs Taubsypuss the cat, all stood tense and rigid. They were very much afraid. But the President himself kept a cool head and a clear brain. ‘Nanny!’ he cried. ‘Oh, Nanny, what on earth do we do now?’

‘I’ll get you a nice warm glass of milk,’ said Miss Tibbs.

‘I hate the stuff,’ said the President. ‘Please don’t make me drink it!’

‘Summon the Chief Interpreter,’ said Miss Tibbs.

‘Summon the Chief Interpreter!’ said the President. ‘Where is he?’

'Right here, Mr President,' said the Chief Interpreter.

'What language was that creature spouting up there in the Space Hotel? Be quick! Was it Eskimo?'

'Not Eskimo, Mr President.'

'Ha! Then it was Tagalog! Either Tagalog or Ugro!'

'Not Tagalog, Mr President. Not Ugro, either.'

'Was it Tulu, then? Or Tungus or Tupi?'

'Definitely not Tulu, Mr President. And I'm quite sure it wasn't Tungus or Tupi.'

'Don't stand there telling him what it wasn't, you idiot!' said Miss Tibbs. 'Tell him what it was!'

'Yes, ma'am, Miss Vice-President, ma'am,' said the Chief Interpreter, beginning to shake. 'Believe me, Mr President,' he went on, 'it was not a language I have ever heard before.'

'But I thought you knew every language in the world?'

'I do, Mr President.'

'Don't lie to me, Chief Interpreter. How can you possibly know every language in the world when you don't know this one?'

'It is not a language of this world, Mr President.'

'Nonsense, man!' barked Miss Tibbs. 'I understood some of it myself!'

'These people, Miss Vice-President, ma'am, have obviously tried to learn just a few of our easier words, but the rest of it is a language that has never been heard before on this Earth!'

'Screaming scorpions!' cried the President. 'You mean to tell me they could be coming from … from … from somewhere else?'

'Precisely, Mr President.'

'Like where?' said the President.

'Who knows?' said the Chief Interpreter. 'But did you not notice, Mr President, how they used the words Venus and Mars?'

'Of course I noticed it,' said the President. 'But what's that got to do with it? … Ah-ha! I see what you're driving at! Good gracious me! Men from Mars!'

'And Venus,' said the Chief Interpreter.

'That,' said the President, 'could make for trouble.'

'I'll say it could!' said the Chief Interpreter.

'He wasn't talking to you,' said Miss Tibbs.

'What do we do now, General?' said the President.

'Blow 'em up!' cried the General.

'You're always wanting to blow things up,' said the President crossly. 'Can't you think of something else?'

'I like blowing things up,' said the General. 'It makes such a lovely noise. Woomph-woomph!'

'Don't be a fool!' said Miss Tibbs. 'If you blow these people up, Mars will declare war on us! So will Venus!'

'Quite right, Nanny,' said the President. 'We'd be troculated like turkeys, every one of us! We'd be mashed like potatoes!'

'I'll take 'em on!' shouted the Chief of the Army.

'Shut up!' snapped Miss Tibbs. 'You're fired!'

'Hooray!' said all the other generals. 'Well done, Miss Vice-President, ma'am!'

Miss Tibbs said, 'We've got to treat these fellows gently. The one who spoke just now sounded extremely cross. We've got to be polite to them, butter them up, make them happy. The last thing we want is to be invaded by men from Mars! You've got to talk to them, Mr

President. Tell Houston we want another direct radio link with the Space Hotel. And hurry!'

Manne van Mars

Niemand sweef in die Ruimtehotel nie. Die swaartekragmasjien sorg daarvoor. Ná hul triomfantelike vasmering loop meneer Wonka, Charlie, oupa Joe en meneer en mevrou Bucket nou by die Glashyser uit lot in die hotel se voorportaal. Oupa George, ouma Georgina en ouma Josephine het meer as twintig jaar
laas 'n voet op die grond gesit en hulle is beslis nie van plan om dit nou skielik te doen nie. So toe die swewery ophou, het hulle al drie dadelik terug in die bed geplons en daarop aangedring dat die bed met hulle daarop by die Ruimtehotel ingestoot word.
Charlie kyk in die yslike portaal rond. Daar is 'n dik
groen mat op die vloer. Twintig kolossale kroonkandelare hang glinsterend van die plafon af. Die mure is vol waardevolle skilderye en daar staan oral groot, sagte geinakstoele rond. Aan die verste kant van die vertrek sien hulle ses hyserdeure. Die groep staar in stilte na a! hierdie weelde. Niemand waag dit om te praat nie. Meneer Wonka het hulle gewaarsku dat Grondbeheer in Houston elke woord wat hulle uiter, sal hoor, so hulle is baie versigtig. 'n Dowwe gegons van iewers onder die vloer af maak die stilte net nog meer spokerig. Charlie
gryp oupa Joe se hand en hou dit styf vas. Hy is nie so seker hy hou hiervan nie. Hulle het ingebreek by die wonderlikste masjien wat nog ooit deur mense gebou is,
'n masjien wat aan die Verenigde State behoort, en as hulle betrap en gevang word soos wat op die ou einde tog sekerlik sal gebeur, wat gaan dan hul straf wees? Lewenslange tronkstraf? Ja, of iets nog ergers.
Meneer Wonka skryf iets op 'n klein velletjie papier. Hy hou dit op sodat hulle kan lees. Daar staan: EN1GIEMAND HONGER?
Die drie oumense in die bed waai hul arms en knik
hul koppe en maak hul monde oop en toe. Meneer Wonka draai die papier om. Op die ander kant staan daar: HIERDIE HOTEL SE KOM BUISE IS PROPVOL SMULLEKKER KOS: KREEF, BIEFSTUK, ROOMYS. ONS SAL 'N FEES DER FEESTE HÊ.
Skielik dreun daar 'n harde stem uit 'n luidspreker
wat iewers in die vertrek weggesteek is. "AANDAG!" bulder die stem en Charlie wip van die skrik. So ook oupa Joe. Almal wip van die skrik, selfs meneer Wonka. "AANDAG, JULLE AGT RUIMTEVAARDERS! DIT IS GRONDBEHEER IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, VSA! JULLE OORTREE OP AMERIKAANSE EIENDOM! JULLE WORD BEVEEL OM JULLE ONMIDDELLIK TE IDENTIFISEER! PRAAT! OP DIE

DAAD!”
“Sjuuuut!” fluister meneer Wonka en hou sy vinger
voor sy mond.
Daar volg ’n paar sekondes van aaklige stilte. Niemand beweeg nie, behalwe meneer Wonka wat aanhoudend sê: “Sjuut! Sjuuuuut!”
“WIE … IS … JULLE?” brul die stem van Houston af en die hele wêreld hoor hom. “EK HERHAAL… WIE …
IS…JULLE?” skree die kwaai stem gebiedend enseshonderd miljoen mense sit vasgenael voor hul televisiestelle en wag ilal die geheimsinnige vreemdelinge in die Ruimtehotel moet antwoord. Die televisie kan nie beeldmateriaal van
11 ierdie geheimsinnige vreemdelinge uitsaai nie. Daar is n
‘11 kamera in die hotel om die toneel te verfilm nie. Net ilie woorde registreer. Die TV-kykers sien niks behalwe die luiitekant van die reusagtige hotel in ’n wentelbaan om ilie Aarde nie, natuurlik soos afgeneem deur Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier, wat op ’n veilige afstand volg. Vir ’n lialfminuut wag die wêreld op ’n antwoord.
Maar niemand antwoord nie.
“PRAAT!” bulder die stem. Dit word harder en harder t*n hou op tot ’n vreesaanjaende, verskriklike geskree wat (:harlie se ore laat tuit. “PRAAT! PRAAT! PRAAT!” (>uma Georgina duik onder die beddegoed in. Ouma losephine steek haar vingers in haar ore. Oupa George
I n-grawe sy kop in die kussing. Meneer en mevrou Bucket,
alhei angsbevange, is weer in mekaar se arms. Charlie klou aan oupa Joe se hand vas en die twee van hulle staar
II a meneer Wonka en smeek hom met hul oë om iets te
Joen. Meneer Wonka staan doodstil en al lyk sy gesig kalin kan mens sien sy slim uitvindersbrein werk teen die spoed van weerlig.
“DIS JULLE LAASTE KANS!” basuin die stem dit uii. “ONS VRA JULLE NOG EEN KEER … WIE… IS
…JIJLLE! ANTWOORD ONMIDDELLIK! AS JULLE
NIL REAGEER NIE, DWING JULLE ONS OM JULLE AS GEVAARLIKE VYANDE TE BESKOU. DAN SAL t)NS 1)IE NOODVRIESSKAKELAAR AKTIVEER EN DIE TEMPERATUUR IN DIE RUIMTEHOTEL SAL Tar MINUS EENHONDERD GRADE CELSIUS
DAAL. JULLE ALMAL SAL OOMBLIKLIK VASVRIES. JULLE HET VYFTIEN SEKONDES OM TE PRAAT. DAARNA SAL JULLE IN YSBLOKKE VERANDER… EEN … TWEE … DRIE …”
“Oupa!” fluister Charlie terwyl die tellery aanhou. “Ons moet iets doen! Ons moet! Gou!”
“SES!” sê die stem. “SEWE!… ACT!… NEGE!…” Meneer Wonka beweeg nie. Hy kyk nog steeds stip
voor horn uit, nog steeds koel en kalm, heeltemal uitdrukkingloos.

Charlie en oupa Joe staar horn met afgryse aan. En toe, ewe skielik, sien hulle klein lagplooitjies om sy ooghoeke verskyn. Hy kry meteens lewe. Hy draai op sy tone in die rondte, huppel 'n paar tree oor die vloer en toe, in 'n waansinnige, onaardse soort stem, skree hy: "FIMBOU FIEZ!"
Die luidspreker hou op tel. Daar is stilte. Regoor die wêreld is daar stilte.
Charlie se oë bly op meneer Wonka vasgenael. Hy gaan
weer iets sê. Hy asem diep in. "BOENGOU BOENIE!" skree hy. Daar is soveel krag in sy stem dat dit hom tot op die punte van sy tone oplig.

"BOENGOU BOENIE DAFOE DOEN1E JOEBIE LOENIE!"

Weer is daar stilte.
Die volgende keer wat meneer Wonka praat, kom die woorde so vinnig en skerp en hard soos koeëls uit
'n masjiengeweer. "ZOENK'ZOENK'ZOENK-ZOENK'
ZOENK!" blaf hy. Die geluid eggo om en om deur die
Ruimtehotel se portaal. Dit eggo om die wêreld.

Meneer Wonka draai om na die verste punt van die portaal waar die luidsprekerstem vandaan gekom het. Hy loop 'n paar tree vorentoe soos 'n man wat 'n meer intieme gesprek met sy gehoor wil voer. En hierdie keer
is sy stemtoon baie sagter en die woorde kom stadiger uit, maar daar is 'n tikkie staal in elke lettergreep:

"KIERASOEKOE MALIEBOEKOE, ONSA SLIMMA JULLIE KOEKOE!

ALLIEPENDA KAKKAMENWA, BROEKKA VALLA ASNIE SWENWA!

FOEIKIEKKA KANDERAKKA, ONSA STERKA JULLIE SWAKKA!

POPPOKOKKA BEROEMAATA PASOPPA JULLIE ONSA KWAATA!

KATTIEKWAATIE ROKKASAKKARS, ONSA VANNA VENUS MARS!"

Meneer Wonka maak 'n dramatiese pouse. Dan asem hy weer geweldig diep in en met 'n wilde en vreesaanjaende stem gil hy:

"KIETIEMBIEBIE ZOENK! FOEMBOLIEZIE ZOENK! GOEGOEMIEZA ZOENK! FOEMIEKAKKA ZOENK!
ANNAPOLALLA ZOENK ZOENK ZOENK!"

Die uitwerking hiervan op die wêreld doer onder is verstommend. In die Beheersentrum in Houston, in die Withuis in Washington, in paleise en stadsgeboue en berghutte van Amerika tot in China tot in Peru, sidder
die seshonderd miljoen mense wat daardie wilde en vreesaanjaende stem daardie vreemde en geheimsinnige woorde hoor uitgil het van vrees voor hul televisiestelle. Almal draai na mekaar en vra: "Wie is hulle? Watter taal is Jit? Waar kom hulle vandaan?"
Iu die President se studeerkamer in die Withuis staan
Visepresident Tibbs, die kabinetslede, die Hoofde van ilie Leër en die Vloot en die Lugmag, die swaardslukker van Afganistan, die Hoof Finansiële Adviseur en mevrou Iiiubsypuss die kat almal gespanne en versteen. Hulle is bang, bitter bang. Maar die President bly koelkop en bolder van verstand. "Nanna!" snak hy. "O Nanna, wat op aarde doen ons nou?"
"Ek kry vir jou 'n glas lekker warm melk," sê juffrou
Tibbs.
"Ek haat die goed," sê die President. "Moet my asseblief nie dwing om dit te drink nie!"
"Ontbied die Hooftolk," sê jufrou Tibbs.
"Ontbied die Hooftolk!" sê die President. "Waar is hy?"
"Hier, Meneer die President," sê die Hooftolk.
"Watter taal het daaikreatuur daar bo indie Ruimtehotel nilgespoeg? Sê gou! Is dit Eskimo?"
"Nee, dis nie Eskimo nie, Meneer die President."
"Ha! Dan is dit Tagalog! Dis of Tagalog of Oeggro!" "Nee, dis nie Tagalog nie, Meneer die President. Ook
nie Oeggro nie."
"Is dit dan Toeloe? Of Toengoes of Toepie?"
"Dis Jefinitief nie Toeloe nie, Meneer die President. En ek is seker dis ook nie Toengoes of Toepie nie."
"Moenie Jaar staan en vir hom sê wat dit nie is nie, jou idioot!" sê juffrou Tibbs. "Sê vir hom wat dit is!"

"Reg mevrou, Mejuffrou die Visepresident, mevrou," sê die Hooftolk en begin bewe. "Glo my, Meneer die President," gaan hy aan, "dis 'n taal wat ek nog nooit vantevore gehoor het nie."
"Maar ek dog dan jy ken al die tale in die wêreld?"
"Inderdaad, Meneer die President."
"Moenie vir my lieg nie, Hooftolk. Hoe de drommel kan jy al die tale in die wêreld ken as jy hierdie een nie ken nie?"
"Dis nie 'n taal van hierdie wêreld nie, Meneer die
President."
"Nonsens, man!" blaf juffrou Tibbs. "Ek het dan stukkies daarvan

verstaan!”
“Paardie mense, Mejuffrou die Visepresident, mevrou, het duidelik probeer om net ’n paar van ons makliker vvnnide te leer, maar die res daarvan is ’n taal wat nog nooit voorheen hier op Aarde gehoor is nie!”
“Skellende skerpioene!” skree die President. “Probeer jy vir my sê hulle kom miskien van … van … van iewers anders af?”
“Prcsies, Meneer die President.” “Soos waar?” vra die President.
“Wie weet?” sê die Hooftolk. “Maar het u agtergekom,
Meneer die President, hulle gebruik die woorde Venus m Mars?”
“Natuurlik het ek dit agtergekom,” sê die President. “Maar wat het dit met die saak te doen? … Alia! Ek sien waarop jy afstuur! Goeie genugtig, man! Manne van Mars!”
” En vroue van Venus,” sê die Hooftolk.
“nit,” sê die President, “kan groot moeilikheid afgee.” “Vir seker!” sê die Hooftolk.
“Hy’t nie met jou gepraat nie,” sê juffrou Tibbs. “Wat doen ons nou, generaal?” vra die President. “Ons blaas hulle op!” gil die Generaal.
“Jy wil altyd alles opblaas,” sê die President vies. “Kan
jy nie aan iets anders dink nie?”
“ Ek hou daarvan om dinge op te blaas,” sê die Generaal. “Dit maak so ’n mooi geluid. Kadoefdoefff!”
“Moenie laf wees nie!” sê juffrou Tibbs. “As jy daardie spul opblaas, verklaar Mars oorlog teen ons! En Venus ook!”
“Heeltemal reg, Nanna,” sê die President. “Ons sal soos kalkoene gekalkoeneer word, elke enkele een van ons! Ons sal soos aartappels fyngeKAPOK word!”
“Ek sal hulle aanvat!” roep die Hoof van die Leër uit.
“Hou jou mond!” kap juffrou Tibbs terug. “Jy’s afgedank!”
“Hoera!” sê al die ander generaals. “Knap gedaan,
Mejuffrou die Visepresident, mevrou!”
Juffrou Tibbs sê: “Ons moet daardie wesens sagkens behandel. Die een wat nou net gepraat het, klink briesend kwaad. Ons moet beleefd teenoor hulle wees, hulle blink lek, hulle gelukkig hou. Die laaste ding wat ons wil hê, is dat Marsmanne ons land binneval! Ons moet met hulle praat, Meneer die President. Sê vir Houston ons wil ’n
direkte radioverbinding met die Ruimtehotel hê. En
I»
gou!

Invitation to the White House

‘The President of the United States will now address you!’ announced the loudspeaker voice in the lobby of the Space Hotel.

Grandma Georgina's head peeped cautiously out from under the sheets. Grandma Josephine took her fingers out of her ears and Grandpa George lifted his face out of the pillow.

'You mean he's actually going to speak to us?' whispered Charlie.

'Ssshhh!' said Mr Wonka. 'Listen!'

'Dear friends!' said the well-known Presidential voice over the loudspeaker. 'Dear, dear friends! Welcome to Space Hotel "U.S.A." Greetings to the brave astronauts from Mars and Venus …'

'Mars and Venus!' whispered Charlie. 'You mean he thinks we're from …'

'Ssshh-ssshh-ssshh!' said Mr Wonka. He was doubled up with silent laughter, shaking all over and hopping from one foot to the other.

'You have come a long way,' the President continued, 'so why don't you come just a tiny bit farther and pay us a visit down here on our humble little Earth? I invite all eight of you to stay with me here in Washington as my honoured guests. You could land that wonderful glass air-machine of yours on the lawn in back of the White House. We shall have the red carpet out and ready. I do hope you know enough of our language to understand me. I shall wait most anxiously for your reply …'

There was a click and the President went off the air.

'What a fantastic thing!' whispered Grandpa Joe. 'The White House, Charlie! We're invited to the White House as honoured guests!'

Charlie caught hold of Grandpa Joe's hands and the two of them started dancing round and round the lobby of the hotel. Mr Wonka, still shaking with laughter, went and sat down on the bed and signalled everyone to gather round close so they could whisper without being heard by the hidden microphones.

'They're scared to death,' he whispered. 'They won't bother us any more now. So let's have that feast we were talking about and afterwards we can explore the hotel.'

'Aren't we going to the White House?' whispered Grandma Josephine.

‘I want to go to the White House and stay with the President.’

‘My dear old dotty dumpling,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘You look as much like a man from Mars as a bedbug! They’d know at once they’d been fooled. We’d be arrested before we could say how d’you do.’

Mr Wonka was right. There could be no question of accepting the President’s invitation and they all knew it.

‘But we’ve got to say something to him,’ Charlie whispered. ‘He must be sitting down there in the White House this very minute waiting for an answer.’

‘Make an excuse,’ said Mr Bucket.

‘Tell him we’re otherwise engaged,’ said Mrs Bucket.

‘You are right,’ whispered Mr Wonka. ‘It is rude to ignore an invitation.’ He stood up and walked a few paces from the group. For a moment or two he remained quite still, gathering his thoughts. Then once again Charlie saw those tiny twinkling smiling wrinkles around the corners of the eyes, and when he began to speak, his voice this time was like the voice of a giant, deep and devilish, very loud and very slow:

‘In the quelchy quaggy sogmire,

In the mashy mideous harshland,

At the witchy hour of gloomness,

All the grobes come oozing home.

You can hear them softly slimeing,

Glissing hissing o’er the slubber,

All those oily boily bodies

Oozing onward in the gloam.

So start to run! Oh, skid and daddle

Through the slubber slush and sossel!

Skip jump hop and try to skaddle!

All the grobes are on the roam!'

In his study two hundred and forty thousand miles below, the President turned white as the White House. 'Jumping jackrabbits!' he cried. 'I think they're after us!'

'Oh, please let me blow them up!' said the Ex-Chief of the Army.

'Silence!' said Miss Tibbs. 'Go stand in the corner!'

In the lobby of the Space Hotel, Mr Wonka had merely paused in order to think up another verse, and he was just about to start off again when a frightful piercing scream stopped him cold. The screamer was Grandma Josephine. She was sitting up in bed and pointing with a shaking finger at the lifts at the far end of the lobby. She screamed a second time, still pointing, and all eyes turned toward the lifts. The door of the one on the left was sliding slowly open and the watchers could clearly see that there was something … something thick … something brown … something not exactly brown, but greenish-brown … something with slimy skin and large eyes … squatting inside the lift!

Uitnodiging na die Withuis

"Die President van die Verenigde State sal julle nou toespreek!" kondig die luidsprekerstem in die Ruimtehotel se voorportaal aan.
Ouma Georgina loer versigtig onder die beddegoed uit. Ouma Josephine haal haar vingers uit haar ore en oupa George lig sy gesig op van die kussing.
"Gaan hy rêrig met ons praat?" fluister Charlie. "Sjuut!" sê meneer Wonka. "Luister!"
"Liewe vriende!" sê die bekende Presidensiële stem oor
(lie luidspreker. "Liewe, liewe vriende! Welkom in die Ruimtehotel VSA. Wees gegroet, dapper ruimtevaarders van Mars en Venus …"
"Mars en Venus!" fluister Charlie. "Dink hy rêrig ons is van …"
"Sj'sj-sjuut!" sê meneer Wonka. Hy is dubbeld gevou soos hy saggies lag; sy skouers skud en hy trippel van een voet na die ander.
"Julle kom 'n lang pad," gaan die President aan, "maar hoekom reis julle nie nog so 'n klein entjie verder en besoek om hier op ons nederige klein planeet Aarde nie? Ek nooi al agt van julle om hier by my in Washington te kom bly as my geëerde gaste. Julle

kan met julle wonderlike vliegmasjien van glas op die grasperk agter die Withuis land. Ons sal die rooi tapyt vir julle gereed hou. Ek hoop julle ken genoeg van ons taal om my te kan verstaan. Ek wag in groot spanning op julle antwoord …"
Daar is 'n klikgeluid en die President is van die lug af.
"Fantasties!" fluister oupa Joe. "Die Withuis, Charlie! Ons is as geëerde gaste na die Withuis genooi!"
Charlie gryp oupa Joe se hande en hulle begin om en
om in die hotel se portaal dans.
Meneer Wonka skud nog van die lag en gaan sit op die bed en wink almal nader sodat die versteekte mikrofone nie hul gefluister kan hoor nie.
"Ilulle is doodbang," fluister hy. "Hulle sal ons nie
non weer pla nie. So kom ons vier daai fees waarvan ons praat en daarna kan ons die hotel verken."
"Gaan ons nie Withuis toe nie?" fluister ouma Josephine. "Ek wil na die Withuis toe gaan en by die hrsident bly."
"My liewe ou kens kluitjie," sê meneer Wonka. "Jy lyk st) min na 'n Marsmannetjie soos 'n weeluis! Hulle Hiil Jadelik weet ons het hulle uitoorlê. Hulle sal ons ill resteer nog voor ons aangename kennis kan sê."
Meneer Wonka is reg. Hulle kan die President se iiilnodiging onmoontlik nie aanvaar nie en hulle almal weet dit.
" Maar ons moet darem vir hom iets sê," fluister Charlie. "I ly sit nou daar onder in die Withuis en wag vir 'n itniwoord."
"Dink 'n verskoning uit," sê meneer Bucket.
"Se vir hom ons het 'n ander afspraak," sê mevrou bucket.
"Julle is reg," fluister meneer Wonka. "Dis ongemanierd om 'n uitnodiging te ignoreer." Hy staan op en beweeg 'n paar tree van die groep af weg. Vir 'n oomblik of twee bly hy tjoepstil staan terwyl hy sy gedagtes agtermekaar kry.
Dan sien Charlie skielik die klein lagplooitjies om sy
ooghoeke en meneer Wonka begin praat. Hierdie keer klink sy stem soos 'n reus s'n, diep en duiwels, baie hard en baie stadig:
"Deur die mammemy en poddery
Deur die meurweekte doeras Lank ná middernag se heksery Kom die Gruiuelgrobbe aangeplas.

Hoor hoe kners en knars hulle op hul tande, Kyk hoe kwyl hul bekke en blink hul snoete! Voel hoe sidder en sweet jy onder hul hande, Die Gruwelgrobbe is op hul moordroete!

Tyd om te vlug! Laat spat, laat spaander! Deur die woud, deur die nag; maak gou! Gee pad: kopoorhals en boldersteholder, Gou! Die

Gruwelgrobbe kom verslind jou!

In sy kantoor tweehonderd en veertig duisend myl onder hulle raak die President so wit soos die Withuis. “Springende springhase!” roep hy uit. “Ek dink hulle soek ons bloed.”
“Asseblief, laat ek hulle opblaas!” smeek die Hoof van
die Leër.
“Stilte!” sê juffrou Tibbs. “Gaan staan in die hoek!”
In die Ruimtehotel se portaal het meneer Wonka stilgebly om nog ’n versie uit te dink en hy wil net weer begin wanneer ’n bloedstollende gil hom laat verstar. Dis ouma Josephine wat so skree. Sy sit regop in die bed en wys met ’n bewende vinger na die hysers aan die verste kant van die portaal. Sy gil ’n tweede keer terwyl sy nog steeds soontoe wys en almal se oë draai na die hysers toe. Die een aan die linkerkant se deur gly effens oop en almal kan duidelik sien daar is iets … iets diks … iets bruins … iets nie heeltemal bruin nie, meer groenerig bruin … iets met ’n slymerige vel en groot oë … iets in die hyser!

Something Nasty in the Lifts

Grandma Josephine had stopped screaming now. She had gone rigid with shock. The rest of the group by the bed, including Charlie and Grandpa Joe, had become as still as stone. They dared not move. They dared hardly breathe. And Mr Wonka, who had swung quickly around to look when the first scream came, was as dumbstruck as the rest. He stood motionless, gaping at the thing in the lift, his mouth slightly open, his eyes stretched wide as two wheels. What he saw, what they all saw, was this:

It looked more than anything like an enormous egg balanced on its pointed end. It was as tall as a big boy and wider than the fattest man. The greenish-brown skin had a shiny wettish appearance and there were wrinkles in it. About three-quarters of the way up, in the widest part, there were two large round eyes as big as tea-cups. The eyes were white, but each had a brilliant red pupil in the centre. The red pupils were resting on Mr Wonka. But now they began travelling slowly across to Charlie and Grandpa Joe and the others by the bed, settling upon them and gazing at them with a cold malevolent stare. The eyes were everything. There were no other features, no nose or mouth or ears, but the entire egg-shaped body was itself moving very very slightly, pulsing and bulging gently here and there as though the skin were filled with some thick fluid.

At this point, Charlie suddenly noticed that the next lift was coming down. The indicator numbers above the door were flashing … 6 … 5 … 4 … 3 … 2 … 1 … L (for lobby). There was a slight pause. The door slid open and there, inside the second lift, was another enormous slimy wrinkled greenish-brown egg with eyes!

Now the numbers were flashing above all three of the remaining lifts. Down they came … down … down … down … And soon, at precisely the same time, they reached the lobby floor and the doors slid open … five open doors now … one creature in each … five in all … and five pairs of eyes with brilliant red centres all watching Mr Wonka and watching Charlie and Grandpa Joe and the others.

There were slight differences in size and shape between the five, but all had the same greenish-brown wrinkled skin and the skin was rippling and pulsing.

For about thirty seconds nothing happened. Nobody stirred, nobody made a sound. The silence was terrible. So was the suspense. Charlie was so frightened he felt himself shrinking inside his skin. Then he saw the creature in the left-hand lift suddenly starting to change shape! Its body was slowly becoming longer and longer, and thinner and thinner, going up and up towards the roof of the lift, not straight up, but curving a little to the left, making a snake-like curve that was curiously graceful, up to the left and then curling over the top to the right and coming down again in a half-circle … and then the bottom end began to grow out as well, like a tail … creeping along the floor … creeping along the floor to the left … until at last the creature, which had originally looked like a huge egg, now looked like a long curvy serpent standing up on its tail.

Then the one in the next lift began stretching itself in much the same way, and what a weird and oozy thing it was to watch! It was twisting itself into a shape that was a bit different from the first, balancing itself almost but not quite on the tip of its tail.

Then the three remaining creatures began stretching themselves all at the same time, each one elongating itself slowly upward, growing taller and taller, thinner and thinner, curving and twisting, stretching and stretching, curling and bending, balancing either on the tail or the head or both, and turned sideways now so that only one eye was visible. When they had all stopped stretching and bending, this was how they finished up:

‘Scram!’ shouted Mr Wonka. ‘Get out quick!’

People have never moved faster than Grandpa Joe and Charlie and Mr and Mrs Bucket at that moment. They all got behind the bed and started pushing like crazy. Mr Wonka ran in front of them shouting ‘Scram! Scram! Scram!’ and in ten seconds flat all of them were out of the lobby and back inside the Great Glass Elevator. Frantically, Mr Wonka began undoing bolts and pressing buttons. The door of the Great Glass Elevator snapped shut and the whole thing leaped sideways. They were away! And of course all of them, including the three old ones in the bed, floated up again into the air.

Iets grillerigs in die hysers

Ouma Josephine hou op gil. Sy sit stokstyf van skok. Die res van die groep by die bed, Charlie en oupa Joe inkluis, staan versteen. Hulle waag dit nie om te beweeg nie. Hulle waag dit skaars om asem te haal. En meneer Wonka, wat met die eerste gil al vinnig omgeswaai het om te kyk, is net so stomgeslaan soos die res. Hy staan bewegingloos, gaap die ding in die hyser aan met sy mond effens oop en sy oë so wyd soos twee wiele gerek. Wat hy sien, wat hulle almal sien, is die volgende:
Dit lyk kompleet soos ’n enorme eier wat op sy
puntkant gebalanseer staan. Dit is so lank soos ’n seun en dikker as die vetste man. Die ding se groenerige bruin vel is half natterig en blink en vol plooie. Omtrent driekwartpad boontoe, op die wydste deel, is daar twee yslike, ronde oë so groot soos teekoppies. Die oë is wit, maar elkeen het ’n helderrooi pupil in die middel. Die rooi pupille rus op meneer Wonka. Maar nou beweeg hulle stadig na Charlie en oupa Joe en die ander in die bed en bly dan op hulle rus met ’n koue, boosaardige blik.
Die oë is al wat daar is. Die ding hetgeen gelaatstrekke, geen neus of mond of ore nie, maar die hele eiervormige

lyf beweeg baie-baie effens en bobbel en bult bietjie hicr en daar asof die vel met een of ander dik vloeistof gevul is.
Skielik sien Charlie die volgende hyser kom ook af oiulertoe. Die nommers bokant die deur flits … 6 … 5
… 4 … 3 … 2 … 1 … P (vir portaal). Daar is ’n oomblik
stilte. Dan gly die deur oop en daar in die tweede hyser is nóg ’n enorme slymerige, plooierige groenerige hruin eier met oë!
Nou begin flits die syfers bokant die oorblywende vier
hysers ook. Hulle kom af … af … af … af … en dan, op presies dieselfde oomblik, bereik hulle die portaal en die deure gly oop … Ses

deure is nou oop … en daar is ’n ding in elke hyser … Ses altesaam … en ses paar oë met helderrooi pupille kyk meneer Wonka en Charlie en oupa Joe en die ander aan.
Die ses verskil ietwat in grootte en vorm, maar hulle
het almal dieselfde groenerige bruin, plooierige vel en die velle bobbel en bult aanhoudend.
Vir omtrent dertig sekondes gebeur daar niks nie. Niemand roer nie, niemand maak ’n geluid nie. Die stilte is afgryslik. So ook die spanning. Charlie is so bang dat hy voel hy krimp behoorlik binne-in sy vel. Dan sien hy skielik hoe die ding in die linkerkantste hyser van vorm begin verander! Die lyf word stadigaan langer en langer en dunner en dunner en gaan op en op na die hyser se dak toe, maar nie reguit op nie; dit krul effens na links en maak ’n kronkel wat soos ’n slang lyk en op
’n vreemde manier grasieus is, op na links en dan krul
dit weer oor na regs en kom met ’n halfsirkel af… en dan begin die onderpunt ook groei en groei soos ’n stert … en kruip met die vloer langs … kruip met die vloer langs na links … totdat die ding wat oorspronklik soos ’n yslike eier gelyk het, nou lyk soos ’n lang slang wat op sy stert staan.
Die een in die volgende hyser begin hom op baie
dieselfde manier uitrek en dis regtig ’n glibberige en glyerige gedoente om dop te hou! Die ding krul homself

in ’n ander vorm as die eerste een, maar balanseer homself op dieselfde manier.
Dan begin die oorblywende vier hul lywe gelyktydig
uitrek. Elkeen strek homself stadig opwaarts, word langer en langer, dunner en dunner, draai en swaai, strek en rek, krul en buig, balanseer op die stert of die kop of albei, en draai dan skuins sodat net een oog sigbaar is. H ulle is uiteindelik klaar gewriemel en gekriewel, en nou spel hul lywe die woord:
S K O E R T
“Skoert!” gil meneer Wonka. “Gee pad! Gou!” Niemand het nog ooit vinniger beweeg as oupa Joe
en Charlie en meneer en mevrou Bucket nie. Hulle spring agter die bed in en begin met alle mag stoot.
Meneer Wonka hardloop voor hulle uit en skree: “Skoert! Skoert! Skoert!” en binne op die kop tien sekondes is hulle almal uit die voorportaal en terug in die Groot Glashyser. Meneer Wonka begin desperaat boute losdraai en knoppies druk. Die Groot Glashyser se deure klap toe, dit spring sywaarts en weg is hulle! En natuurlik begin hulle almal, die drie oumense op die bed inkluis, in die lug opstyg en rondsweef.

The Vermicious Knids

'Oh, my goodness me!' gasped Mr Wonka. 'Oh, my sainted pants! Oh, my painted ants! Oh, my crawling cats! I hope never to see anything like that again!' He floated over to the white button and pressed it. The booster-rockets fired. The Elevator shot forward at such a speed that soon the Space Hotel was out of sight far behind.

'But who were those awful creatures?' Charlie asked.

'You mean you didn't know?' cried Mr Wonka. 'Well, it's a good thing you didn't! If you'd had even the faintest idea of what horrors you were up against, the marrow would have run out of your bones! You'd have been fossilized with fear and glued to the ground! Then they'd have got you! You'd have been a cooked cucumber! You'd have been rasped into a thousand tiny bits, grated like cheese and flocculated alive! They'd have made necklaces from your knucklebones and bracelets from your teeth! Because those creatures, my dear ignorant boy, are the most brutal, vindictive, venomous, murderous beasts in the entire universe!' Here Mr Wonka paused and ran the tip of a pink tongue all the way around his lips. 'VERMICIOUS KNIDS!' he cried. 'That's what they were!' He sounded the K … K'NIDS, like that.

'I thought they were grobes,' Charlie said. 'Those oozy-woozy grobes you were telling the President about.'

'Oh, no, I just made those up to scare the White House,' Mr Wonka answered. 'But there is nothing made up about Vermicious Knids, believe you me. They live, as everybody knows, on the planet Vermes, which is eighteen thousand four hundred and twenty-seven million miles away and they are very, very clever brutes indeed. The Vermicious Knid can turn itself into any shape it wants. It has no bones. Its body is really one huge muscle, enormously strong, but very stretchy and squishy, like a mixture of rubber and putty with steel wires inside. Normally it is egg-shaped, but it can just as easily give itself two legs like a human or four legs like a horse. It can become as round as a ball or as long as a kite-string. From fifty yards away, a fully grown Vermicious Knid could stretch out its neck and bite your head off without even getting up!'

'Bite off your head with what?' said Grandma Georgina. 'I didn't see any mouth.'

'They have other things to bite with,' said Mr Wonka darkly.

'Such as what?' said Grandma Georgina.

'Ring off,' said Mr Wonka. 'Your time's up. But listen, everybody. I've just had a funny thought. There I was fooling around with the President and pretending we were creatures from some other planet and, by golly, there actually were creatures from some other planet on board!'

'Do you think there were many?' Charlie asked. 'More than the five we saw?'

'Thousands!' said Mr Wonka. 'There are five hundred rooms in that Space Hotel and there's probably a family of them in every room!'

'Somebody's going to get a nasty shock when they go on board!' said Grandpa Joe.

They'll be eaten like peanuts,' said Mr Wonka. 'Every one of them.'

'You don't really mean that, do you, Mr Wonka?' Charlie said.

'Of course I mean it,' said Mr Wonka. 'These Vermicious Knids are the terror of the Universe. They travel through space in great swarms, landing on other stars and planets and destroying everything they find. There used to be some rather nice creatures living on the moon a long time ago. They were called Poozas. But the Vermicious Knids ate the lot. They did the same on Venus and Mars and many other planets.'

'Why haven't they come down to our Earth and eaten us?' Charlie asked.

'They've tried to, Charlie, many times, but they've never made it. You see, all around our Earth there is a vast envelope of air and gas, and anything hitting that at high speed gets red hot. Space capsules are made of special heat-proof metal, and when they make a re-entry, their speeds are reduced right down to about two thousand miles an hour, first by retro-rockets and then by something called "friction". But even so, they get badly scorched. Knids, which are not heat-proof at all, and don't have any retro-rockets, get sizzled up completely before they're halfway through. Have you ever seen a shooting star?'

'Lots of them,' Charlie said.

'Actually, they're not shooting stars at all,' said Mr Wonka. 'They're Shooting Knids. They're Knids trying to enter the Earth's atmosphere at high speed and going up in flames.'

'What rubbish,' said Grandma Georgina.

'You wait,' said Mr Wonka. 'You may see it happening before the day is done.'

'But if they're so fierce and dangerous,' Charlie said, 'why didn't they eat us up right away in the Space Hotel? Why did they waste time twisting their bodies into letters and writing SCRAM?'

'Because they're show-offs,' Mr Wonka replied. 'They're tremendously proud of being able to write like that.'

'But why say scram when they wanted to catch us and eat us?'

'It's the only word they know,' Mr Wonka said.

'Look!' screamed Grandma Josephine, pointing through the glass. 'Over there!'

Before he even looked, Charlie knew exactly what he was going to see. So did the others. They could tell by the high hysterical note in the old lady's voice.

And there it was, cruising effortlessly alongside them, a simply colossal Vermicious Knid, as thick as a whale, as long as a lorry, with the most brutal vermicious look in its eye! It was no more than a dozen yards away, egg-shaped, slimy, greenish-brown, with one malevolent red eye (the only one visible) fixed intently upon the people floating inside the Great Glass Elevator!

'The end has come!' screamed Grandma Georgina.

'He'll eat us all!' cried Mrs Bucket.

'In one gulp!' said Mr Bucket.

'We're done for, Charlie,' said Grandpa Joe. Charlie nodded. He couldn't speak or make a sound. His throat was seized up with fright.

But this time Mr Wonka didn't panic. He remained perfectly calm. 'We'll soon get rid of that!' he said and he pressed six buttons all at once and six booster-rockets went off simultaneously under the Elevator. The Elevator leaped forward like a stung horse, faster and faster, but the great green greasy Knid kept pace alongside it with no trouble at all.

'Make it go away!' yelled Grandma Georgina. 'I can't stand it looking at me!'

'Dear lady,' said Mr Wonka, 'it can't possibly get in here. I don't mind admitting I was a trifle alarmed back there in the Space Hotel. And with good reason. But here we have nothing to fear. The Great Glass Elevator is shockproof, waterproof, bombproof, bulletproof and Knidproof! So just relax and enjoy it.'

'Oh you Knid, you are vile and vermicious!'

cried Mr Wonka.

'You are slimy and soggy and squishous!

But what do we care

'Cause you can't get in here,

So hop it and don't get ambitious!'

At this point, the massive Knid outside turned and started cruising away from the Elevator. 'There you are,' cried Mr Wonka, triumphant. 'It heard me! It's going home!' But Mr Wonka was wrong. When the creature was about a hundred yards off, it stopped, hovered for a moment, then went smoothly into reverse, coming back toward the Elevator with its rear-end (which was the pointed end of the egg) now in front. Even going backwards, its acceleration was unbelievable. It was like some monstrous bullet coming at them and it came so fast nobody had time even to cry out.

CRASH! It struck the Glass Elevator with the most enormous bang and the whole thing shivered and shook but the glass held and the Knid bounced off like a rubber ball.

'What did I tell you!' shouted Mr Wonka, triumphant. 'We're safe as

sausages in here!’

‘He’ll have a nasty headache after that,’ said Grandpa Joe.

‘It’s not his head, it’s his bottom!’ said Charlie. ‘Look, there’s a big bump coming up on the pointed end where he hit! It’s going black and blue!’

And so it was. A purple bruisy bump the size of a small car was appearing on the pointed rear-end of the giant Knid. ‘Hello, you dirty great beast!’ cried Mr Wonka.

‘Hello, you great Knid! Tell us, how do you do?

You’re a rather strange colour today.

Your bottom is purple and lavender blue.

Should it really be looking that way?

Are you not feeling well? Are you going to faint?

Is it something we cannot discuss?

It must be a very unpleasant complaint,

For your backside’s as big as a bus!

Let me get you a doctor. I know just the man

For a Knid with a nasty disease.

He’s a butcher by trade which is not a bad plan,

And he charges quite reasonable fees.

Ah, here he is now! “Doc, you really are kind

To travel so far into space.

There’s your patient, the Knid with the purple behind!

Do you think it’s a desperate case?”

“Great heavens above! It’s no wonder he’s pale!”

Said the doc with a horrible grin.

“There’s a sort of balloon on the end of his tail!

I must prick it at once with a pin!”

So he got out a thing like an Indian spear,

With feathers all over the top,

And he lunged and he caught the Knid smack in the rear,

But alas, the balloon didn’t pop!

Cried the Knid, “What on earth am I going to do

With this painful preposterous lump?

I can’t remain standing the whole summer through!

And I cannot sit down on my rump!”

“It’s a bad case of rear-ache,” the medico said,

“And it’s something I cannot repair.

If you want to sit down, you must sit on your head,

With your bottom high up in the air!”’

Die WurmWroete

“O, my genade ons!” hyg meneer Wonka. “O, klappende klerk! O, flappende vlerk! O, kermende katte! Ek hoop ek sien nooit, ooit weer so iets nie!” Hy sweef oor 11a die wit knoppie en druk dit. Die aanjaagvuurpyle ontbrand. Die hyser skiet teen so ’n geweldige spoed vorentoe dat die Ruimtehotel spoedig uit sig en ver agter hulle is.
“Maar wat is daardie aaklige goed?” vra Charlie.
“Jy bedoel jy weet nie?” roep meneer Wonka uit. “Ook maar goed jy weet nie! As jy selfs die vaagste benul gehad het van die gruwels wat ons in die gesig gestaar het, sou al die murg uit j ou pype geloop het! Jy sou van vrees versteen en aan die grond vasgenael en -gegom

gewees het! Dan sou hulle jou gekry het! Jy sou ’n gekookte komkommer gewees het! Hulle sou jou in ’n duisend klein stukkies gerasper het, gerasper soos kaas en lewendig geflokkuleer! Hulle sou halssnoere van jou kneukels gemaak het en armbande van jou tande! Want daardie goed, my liewe on ingeligte seun, is die brutaalste, wraaksugtigste, giftigste, moordlustigste ongediertes in die ganse heelal!
1 lieronderbreek meneer Wonka homself, leksylippe met die punt van sy pienk tong af en sê: “WURM-WROETE. Dis wat hulle is. WurmWroete!”
“Ek dog hulle is Gruwelgrobbe,” sê Charlie. “Daai jiggie-iggie Gruwelgrobbe waarvan jy die President vertel het.”
“O nee, ek het hulle net uitgedink om die Withuis bang te maak,” antwoord meneer Wonka. “Maar die Wurnv Wroete is allesbehalwe ’n jokstorie, glo my. Hulle woon, soos almal weet, op die planeet Wurmus, wat agtienduisend vierhonderd sewe-en-twintig miljoen myl ver is en hulle is baie-baie skelm ongediertes. ’n WurmWroet kan homself in enige vorm verander wat hy wil. Hy het g’n bene nie. Sy lyf is eintlik een reusagtige spier, geweldig sterk, maar baie rekbaar en sag, soos ’n mengsel van rubber en klei met staaldrade binne-in. Hulle is gewoonlik eiervormig, maar kan net so maklik vir hulself twee bene soos ’n mens of vier bene soos ’n perd gee. Hulle kan hulself rond soos ’n bal maak of so lank soos ’n vlieër se tou. ’n Volgroeide WurmWroet kan vyftig tree van jou af wees en sy nek rek en jou kop afbyt sonder om eers op te staan!”
“Jou kop afbyt? Waarmee?” vra ouma Georgina. “Ek het nie ’n mond gesien nie.”
“Hulle het ander dinge om mee te byt,” sê meneer
Wonka geheimsinnig.
“Soos wat?” wil ouma Georgina weet.
“Genoeg,” sê meneer Wonka. “Vraetyd is verstreke. Maar luister, almal. Ek het nou net aan iets baie snaaks gedink. Daar skeer ek die gek met die President en maak of ons wesens van ’n ander planeet is en jou waarlik, toe was daar wesens van ’n ander planeet aan boord!”
“Dink jy daar was baie van hulle?” vra Charlie. “Meer
as die ses wat ons gesien het?”
“Duisende!” sê meneer Wonka. “Daar is seshonderd kamers in daai Ruimtehotel en daar is seker ’n gesin van hulle in elke kamer!”
“Iemand gaan ’n lelike skok kry wanneer hulle aan boord gaan!” sê oupa Joe.
“Hulle gaan soos grondboontjies opgeëet word,” sê meneer Wonka. “Elke enkele een van hulle.”
“Jy bedoel dit nie regtig nie, nê meneer Wonka?” vra
Charlie.

"Natuurlik bedoel ekdit," sê meneer Wonka. "Daardie WurmWroete is die verskrikking van die heelal. Hulle reis in groot swerms deur die ruimte, land op ander sterre en planete en verwoes alles waarop hulle afkom. Lank gelede het daar nogal aangename wesens op die maan gebly. Hulle is Poezas genoem. Maar die WurmWroete het hulle almal opgeëet. En hulle het dieselfde op Venus en Mars en baie ander planete gedoen."
"Hoekom het hulle nog nie af Aarde toe gekom om ons ook op te eet nie?" vra Charlie.
"Hulle het al probeer, al baie kere, maar hulle kon dit nog nooit regkry nie. Jy sien, reg random ons planeet is daar 'n reuseomhulsel van lug en gas, en enigiets wat teen 'n hoë spoed daarin vasvlieg, word rooiwarm. Ruimtekapsules word gemaak van spesiale metaal wat hittebestand is en wanneer hulle die Aarde se atmosfeer weer binnedring, word hul spoed verminder tot omtrent net tweeduisend myl per uur, eers deur truvuurpyle en dan deur iets genaamd 'wrywing'. Maar nogtans word hulle baie erg geskroei. WurmWroete is glad nie hittebestand nie en het nie enige truvuurpyle nie en word daarom heeltemal verskroei voor hulle nog halfpad deur is. Het jy al 'n verskietende ster gesien?"
"Baie," sê Charlie.
"Wei, dit is eintlik glad nie verskietende sterre nie,"
se meneer Wonka. "Dis verskroeiende WurmWroete.
Dis Wroete wat teen 'n hoë spoed by die Aarde se atmosfeer probeer inkom en dan eenvoudig vlam vat."
"Bog," sê ouma Georgina.
"Wag maar," sê meneer Wonka, "julle sien dit dalk nog gebeur voor die dag om is."
"Maar as hulle so verskriklik gevaarlik is," vra Charlie, "hoekom het hulle ons nie dadelik in die Ruimtehotel opgeëet nie? Hoekom het hulle tyd gemors deur hul lywe in letters te verander en SKOERT te skryf?"
"Want hulle wou spog," antwoord meneer Wonka. "Hulle is geweldig trots daarop dat hulle kan skryf."
"Maar hoekom sê hulle skoert as hulle ons wil vang en opeet?"
"Dis die enigste woord wat hulle ken," sê meneer Wonka.
"Kyk!" gil ouma Josephine en wys deur die glas. "Daarso!"
Voor hy nog kyk, weet Charlie presies wat hy gaan sien. Die ander ook. Hulle weet dit omdat die ou dame se stem so hoog en histeries is.
En daar is dit, besig om moeiteloos langs hulle te sweef,
'n absoluut kolossale WurmWroet, so wyd soos 'n walvis, so lank soos 'n lorrie, met die brutaalste wurmkyk in sy oog! Hy is skaars twaalf

tree van hulle af, eiervormig, slymerig, groenerig bruin, met een boosaardige rooi oog (die enigste een sigbaar) wat stip kyk na die mense wat in die Groot Glashyser ronddobber!
“Die einde is hier!” gil ouma Georgina.
“Hy gaan ons almal opvreet!” gil mevrou Bucket. “Met een sluk!” sê meneer Bucket.
“Dis neusie verby met ons, Charlie,” sê oupa Joe.
Charlie knik. Hy kan nie praat of ’n geluid maak nie.
Sy keel het van vrees toegetrek.
Maar hierdie keer raak meneer Wonka nie paniekerig nie. Hy bly totaal en al kalm. “Ons sal gou van hom ontslae raak!” sê hy. Hy druk ses knoppies gelyktydig en ses aanjaagvuurpyle ontbrand gelyk onder die hyser. Die hyser spring vorentoe soos ’n perd wat deur ’n by gesteek is, vinniger en vinniger, maar die groot groen, glibberige Wroet hou sonder moeite by.
“Jaag hom weg!” gil ouma Georgina. “Ek kan dit nie
verdra dat hy so vir my kyk nie!”
“Geagte dame,” sê meneer Wonka. “Hy kan onmoontlik nie hier inkom nie. Ek erken ek was ’n bietjie begaan daar in die Ruimtehotel, en met goeie rede. Maar hier het ons niks te vrees nie. Die Groot Glashyser is bomvas, koeëlvas, skokbestand, waterbestand en Wroetbestand! So ontspan gerus en geniet dit.”

”Sies, jou Wroet, jy’s walglik en wurmlik!”

roep meneer Wonka uit.

“Jy’s slymerig en slobberig en modderig! Maar dink jy ons gee ’n flenter om?
Jy probeer tog verniet hier inkom.
So vat die pad voor jy ons natspat!”

En net daar draai die massiewe WurmWroet om. en begin van die h”ˆser af wegbeweeg. “Daar’s hy!” kondig meneer Wonka triomfantelik aan. “Hy’t my gehoor! Hy gaan huis toe!” Maar meneer Wonka is verkeerd. Toe die ding omtrent ’n honderd tree ver is, stop hy, hang
’11 oomblik in die lug, glip dan glad in trurat en jaag
terug na die hyser met sy agterkant (die gepunte deel van die eier) na voor. Selfs in trurat is sy versnelling ongelooflik. Dit is soos ’n monsteragtige koeël wat op hulle afpyl en dit kom so vinnig dat niemand eers tyd het om te gil nie.
KADWAR! Dit tref die Glashyser met ’n geweldige slag en die hele ding bewe en skud, maar die glas hou en die Wroet wip weg soos ’n rubberbal.

“Wathetekjullegesê!”gilmeneerWonkauitgelate.”Ons is so veilig soos vlooie hier binne!”
“Hy gaan ’n lelike hoofpyn hê na daardie hou,” sê oupa
Joe.
“Dit was nie sy kop nie; dit was sy stert!” sê Charlie. “Kyk, daar kom ’n groot knop aan die punt waarmee hy ons getref het! Dit raak swart en blou!”
En sowaar, ’n perserige kneusplek so groot soos ’n klein motortjie verskyn op die reuseWroet se gepunte agterent.
“Hallo, jou nare gedierte!” gil meneer Wonka.

“Hallo, WurmWroet! Hoe gaan dit met jou? Hoekom is jou agterstewe so opgehewe en blou? Dis skielik pimped en pers.
Dis regtig nogal pervers.

Voel jy bietjie olik? Voel jy skielik flout Wat makeer? Is daar dan fout met jou? As jy met ons wil praat, kan jy gerus. Jou agterstewe is so groot soos ’n bus!

Ek dink ons moet vir jou ’n dokter kry. Dis onnodig dat jy so ly en swaarkry.
Ek ken ’n slagter, ’n meester met die mes. Hy’s goedkoop en doen altyd sy allerbes.

A, hier is hy nou! “Dag, Dok, en hartlik welkom. Dankie dat jy tot in die buitenste ruim kon kom. Daar’s jou pasiënt, met die knop op sy sitvlak. Hy’s desperaat van pyn; hy krul van ongemak.

“Aardetjie,! Nou weet ek hoekom’s hy so bleek!”
Sê die slagtersdokter en probeer sy grinnik wegsteek. “Daai ding op sy stert lyk afskuwelik.
Ek sal dit sommer op die daad moet prik!”

Hy haal iets uit wat lyk soos ’n spies
En steek die WurmWroet in sy lies.
Maar helaas, die swelsel weier om af te blaas
En die ongedierte begin te kla en te raas.

“Wat gaan ek doen? Hoe gaan ek dit oorleef! Die pyn laat trek my al heeltemal skeef!
Is ek veronderstel om vir ewig te staanI
Ek sal mos van my verstand af gaan!”

“Jy sal moet vrede maak met jou mankement, ” Sê die kwak. “Dis nou

jou lot tot die bitter end. So as jy wil sit, sit dan op jou kop
En ligjou alie hoog in die lug op!"

Gobbled Up

On the day when all this was happening, no factories opened anywhere in the world. All offices and schools were closed. Nobody moved away from the television screens, not even for a couple of minutes to get a Coke or to feed the baby. The tension was unbearable. Everybody heard the American President's invitation to the men from Mars to visit him in the White House. And they heard the weird rhyming reply, which sounded rather threatening. They also heard a piercing scream (Grandma Josephine), and a little later on, they heard someone shouting, 'Scram! Scram! Scram!' (Mr Wonka). Nobody could make head or tail of the shouting. They took it to be some kind of Martian language. But when the eight mysterious astronauts suddenly rushed back into their glass capsule and broke away from the Space Hotel, you could almost hear the great sigh of relief that rose up from the peoples of the earth. Telegrams and messages poured into the White House congratulating the President upon his brilliant handling of a frightening situation.

The President himself remained calm and thoughtful. He sat at his desk rolling a small piece of wet chewing-gum between his finger and thumb. He was waiting for the moment when he could flick it at Miss Tibbs without her seeing him. He flicked it and missed Miss Tibbs but hit the Chief of the Air Force on the tip of his nose.

'Do you think the men from Mars have accepted my invitation to the White House?' the President asked.

'Of course they have,' said the Foreign Secretary. 'It was a brilliant speech, sir.'

'They're probably on their way down here right now,' said Miss Tibbs. 'Go and wash that nasty sticky chewing-gum off your fingers quickly. They could be here any minute.'

'Let's have a song first,' said the President. 'Sing another one about me, Nanny … please.'

THE NURSE'S SONG

This mighty man of whom I sing,

The greatest of them all,

Was once a teeny little thing,

Just eighteen inches tall.

I knew him as a tiny tot.

I nursed him on my knee.

I used to sit him on the pot

And wait for him to wee.

I always washed between his toes,

And cut his little nails.

I brushed his hair and wiped his nose

And weighed him on the scales.

Through happy childhood days he strayed,

As all nice children should.

I smacked him when he disobeyed,

And stopped when he was good.

It soon began to dawn on me

He wasn't very bright,

Because when he was twenty-three

He couldn't read or write.

'What shall we do?' his parents sobbed.

'The boy has got the vapours!

He couldn't even get a job

Delivering the papers!'

'Ah-ha,' I said. 'This little clot

Could be a politician.'

'Nanny,' he cried. 'Oh Nanny, what

A super proposition!'

'Okay,' I said. 'Let's learn and note

The art of politics.

Let's teach you how to miss the boat

And how to drop some bricks,

And how to win the people's vote

And lots of other tricks.

Let's learn to make a speech a day

Upon the TV screen,

In which you never never say

Exactly what you mean.

And most important, by the way,

Is not to let your teeth decay,

And keep your fingers clean.'

And now that I am eighty-nine,

It's too late to repent.

The fault was mine the little swine

Became the President.

'Bravo, Nanny!' cried the President, clapping his hands. 'Hooray!' shouted the others. 'Well done, Miss Vice-President, ma'am! Brilliant! Tremendous!'

'My goodness!' said the President. 'Those men from Mars will be here any moment! What on earth are we going to give them for lunch? Where's my Chief Cook?'

The Chief Cook was a Frenchman. He was also a French spy and at this moment he was listening at the keyhole of the President's study. 'Ici, Monsieur le President!' he said, bursting in.

'Chief Cook,' said the President. 'What do men from Mars eat for lunch?'

'Mars Bars,' said the Chief Cook.

'Baked or boiled?' asked the President.

'Oh, baked, of course, Monsieur le President. You will ruin a Mars Bar by boiling!'

The voice of astronaut Shuckworth cut in over the loudspeaker in the President's study. 'Request permission to link up and go aboard Space Hotel?' he said.

'Permission granted,' said the President. 'Go right ahead, Shuckworth. It's all clear now … Thanks to me.'

And so the large Transport Capsule, piloted by Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler, with all the hotel managers and assistant managers and hall porters and pastry chefs and bell-boys and waitresses and chambermaids on board, moved in smoothly and linked up with the giant Space Hotel.

'Hey there! We've lost our television picture,' called the President.

'I'm afraid the camera got smashed against the side of the Space Hotel, Mr President,' Shuckworth replied. The President said a very rude word into the microphone and ten million children across the nation began repeating it gleefully and got smacked by their parents.

'All astronauts and one hundred and fifty hotel staff safely aboard

Space Hotel!' Shuckworth reported over the radio. 'We are now standing in the lobby!'

'And what do you think of it all?' asked the President. He knew the whole world was listening in and he wanted Shuckworth to say how wonderful it was. Shuckworth didn't let him down.

'Gee, Mr President, it's just great!' he said. 'It's unbelievable! It's so enormous! And so … it's kind of hard to find words to describe it, it's so truly grand, especially the chandeliers and the carpets and all! I have the Chief Hotel Manager, Mr Walter W. Wall, beside me now. He would like the honour of a word with you, sir.'

'Put him on,' said the President.

'Mr President, sir, this is Walter Wall. What a sumptuous hotel this is! The decorations are superb!'

'Have you noticed that all the carpets are wall-to-wall, Mr Walter Wall?' said the President.

'I have indeed, Mr President.'

'All the wallpaper is all wall-to-wall, too, Mr Walter Wall.'

'Yes, sir, Mr President! Isn't that something! It's going to be a real pleasure running a beautiful hotel like this! … Hey! What's going on over there? Something's coming out of the lifts! Help!' Suddenly the loudspeaker in the President's study gave out a series of the most ghastly screams and yells. 'Ayeeeee! Owwwww! Ayeeeee! Hel-l-l-lp! Hel-l-l-l-lp! Hel-l-l-l-l-l-l-l-lp!'

'What on earth's going on?' said the President. 'Shuckworth! Are you there, Shuckworth? … Shanks! Showler! Mr Walter Wall! Where are you all! What's happening?'

The screams continued. They were so loud the President had to put his fingers in his ears. Every house in the world that had a television or radio receiver heard those awful screams. There were other noises, too. Loud grunts and snortings and crunching sounds. Then there was silence.

Frantically the President called the Space Hotel on the radio. Houston called the Space Hotel. The President called Houston. Houston called

the President. Then both of them called the Space Hotel again. But answer came there none. Up there in space all was silent.

‘Something nasty’s happened,’ said the President.

‘It’s those men from Mars,’ said the Ex-Chief of the Army. ‘I told you to let me blow them up.’

‘Silence!’ snapped the President. ‘I’ve got to think.’

The loudspeaker began to crackle. ‘Hello!’ it said. ‘Hello hello hello! Are you receiving me, Space Control in Houston?’

The President grabbed the mike on his desk. ‘Leave this to me, Houston!’ he shouted. ‘President Gilligrass here receiving you loud and clear! Go ahead!’

‘Astronaut Shuckworth here, Mr President, back aboard the Transport Capsule … thank heavens!’

‘What happened, Shuckworth? Who’s with you?’

‘We’re most of us here, Mr President, I’m glad to say. Shanks and Showler are with me, and a whole bunch of other folks. I guess we lost maybe a couple of dozen people altogether, pastry chefs, hall porters, that sort of thing. It sure was a scramble getting out of that place alive!’

‘What do you mean you lost two dozen people?’ shouted the President. ‘How did you lose them?’

‘Gobbled up!’ replied Shuckworth. ‘One gulp and that was it! I saw a big six-foot-tall assistant-manager being swallowed up just like you’d swallow a lump of ice-cream, Mr President! No chewing — nothing! Just down the hatch!’

‘But who?’ yelled the President. ‘Who are you talking about? Who did the swallowing?’

‘Hold it!’ cried Shuckworth. ‘Oh, my lord, here they all come now! They’re coming after us! They’re swarming out of the Space Hotel! They’re coming out in swarms! You’ll have to excuse me a moment, Mr President. No time to talk right now!’

Opgeslurp

Op die dag wat al hierdie dinge gebeur, is daar nêrens in die wêreld enige fabrieke oop nie. Al die kantore en skole is gesluit. Niemand gee voor die televisie pad nie, nie eens vir ’n paar minute om ’n koeldrank te kry of die baba te voer nie. Die spanning is ondraaglik. Almal hoor hoe die Amerikaanse President die Marsmanne nooi om vir hom in die Withuis te kom kuier. En hulle hoor die vreemde, rymende antwoord wat taamlik dreigend klink. Hulle hoor ook ’n deurdringende gil (ouma Josephine) en ’n rukkie later hoor hulle hoe skree iemand: “Skoert! Skoert! Skoert!” (Meneer Wonka). Niemand kan kop of stert van die gegil uitmaak nie. Hulle neem aan dit is een of ander taal van Mars. Maar wanneer die agt geheimsinnige ruimtevaarders skielik terug na hul glaskapsule toe storm en van die Ruimtehotel ontkoppel, kan jy amper die groot sug van verligting van die aarde af hoor opstyg. Telegramme en boodskappe stroom na die Withuis om die President geluk te wens met die briljante inanier waarop hy ’n skrikwekkende situasie gehanteer
het.
Hie President self bly kalm en diep ingedagte. Hy sit by sy lessenaar en rol ’n klein stukkie nat kougom tussen
sy vinger en duim. Hy wag vir die oomblik wanneer hy juffrou Tibbs daarmee kan skiet sonder dat sy hom sien. Hy kry sy kans, maar skiet juffrou Tibbs mis en tref die Hoof van die Lugmag op die punt van sy neus.
“Dink julle die Marsmanne het my uitnodiging na die
Withuis aanvaar?” vra die President.
“Natuurlik het hulle,” sê die Minister van Buitelandse Sake. “Dit was ’n briljante toespraak, Meneer die President.”
“Hulle is heel moontlik reeds op pad hierheen,”
sê juffrou Tibbs. “Gaan was gou daardie vieslike taai
kougom van jou vingers af. Hulle kan enige oomblik hier opdaag.”
“Sing eers vir ons ’n liedjie,” sê die President. “Sing nog
een oor my, Nanna … ’seblief.”
DIE OPPASSTER SE LIED Die magtige man van wie ek sing
Ken eh al leivenslank.
Hy was eens ’n piepklein kleinding, Net agtien duim lank.

Ek het hom vasgehou,
Hom versorg as ’n seuntjie. Ek het sy doeke drooggehou, Hom geleer poef op sy potjie.

Ek het hom tussen sy tone leer was
En sy naels mooi kort afgeknip. Sy hare geborsel, sy klere gewas En

hom op my knie rondgewip.

Hy was ’n oulike klein kleuter
Soms was hy soet, soms was hy stout, Hy’t altyd met alles gepeuter.
Dan het ek hom gepiets op sy boud.

Ek het vinnig agtergekom
Hy sukkel om te skryf en te lees
En is eintlik maar bra dom.
Sy ouers was histeries gewees.
“Wat gaan ons doenV’ het hulle gekerm.
“Hoe kon mense soos ons so ’n kind oplewer? Wie gaan hul ná ons dood oor horn ontferm? Hy sal eendag moet koerante ofmelk aflewer!”

“Wag bietjie, ” sê ek toe op ’n dag.
“Dié knaap is uitgeknip vir ’n politikus!” “Nanna!” juig hulle en huil en lag.
“Nou sal ons siele sag en salig kan rus!”

“Reg, ”sê ek. “Kom ons begin leer
Horn dadelik die kuns van politiseer.
Kom ons leer hom hoe om stemme te werf,
Hoe om oornag onverdiende roem te verwerf, Hoe om mense ’n gat in die kop te praat,
Hoe om almal te laat glo jy is paraat.

Kom ons leer hom toesprake maak Op radio en wêreldwye televisie. Kom ons leer hom beloftes maak
En spog oor sy groot vredesmissie.

Met naels en tande wat blink, Met klere netjies gestryk,
Met dienaars vinnig en flink, Met woorde verdraai en geyk. ”

Maar nou is ek ’n stokou vrou En ek erken ek het innig berou, Want hy hét toe President geword
En wat gaan nou van ons landjie word?
“Bravo, Nanna!” gil die President en klap hande. “Hoera!” skree die ander. “Pragtig, Mejuffrou die Visepresident, mevrou! Briljant! Voortreflik!”
“My genugtig!” sê die President. “Daardie Marsmanne
sal nou enige oomblik hier wees. Wat op aarde gaan ons hulle vir middagete gee? Waar’s my Hoofsjef?”
Die Hoofsjef is ’n Fransman. Hy is ook ’n Franse

spioen en hy luister op die oomblik deur die President se studeerkamer se sleutelgat af. “Ici, Monsieur le President!” sê hy en bars in.
“Hoofsjef,” sê die President. “Wat eet Marsmanne vir
middagete?”
“Mars Bars,” sê die Hoofsjef.
“Gebak of gekook?” vra die President.
“O, gebak natuurlik, Monsieur le President. Mens ruïneer ’n Mars Bar as jy hom kook!”
Die ruimtevaarder Shuckworth se stem sny in oor die luidspreker in die President se studeerkamer. “Versoek verlof om te koppel en aan boord Ruimtehotel te gaan,” sê hy.
“Verlof toegestaan,” sê die President. “Gaan gerus
voort, Shuckworth. Dis nou veilig … Danksy my.”
En die yslike Vervoerkapsule met Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier aan die stuur en met al die hotelbestuurders en assistentbestuurders en portiers en kokke en hoteljoggies en kelnerinne en kamermeisies aan boord koppel sonder probleme met die reusegroot Ruimtehotel.
“Haai, ons het beeld verloor!” skree die President.
“Ek is bevrees die kamera is teen die kant van die Ruimtehotel verpletter, Meneer die President,” antwoord Shuckworth. Die President sê ’n baie lelike woord in
die mikrofoon en tien miljoen kinders regoor die wêreld begin dit vrolik herhaal en kry ’n oorveeg by hul ouers.
“Alle ruimtevaarders en eenhonderd en vyftig
hotelpersoneel veilig aan boord van Ruimtehotel!” rapporteer Shuckworth oor die radio. “Ons staan nou in die voorportaal!”
“En wat dink julle van dit alles?” vra die President. Hy
weet die hele wêreld luister en hy wil hê Shuckworth moet sê hoe wonderlik dit is. Shuckworth laat hom nie in die steek nie.
“Sjoe, Meneer die President, dit is fantastiesl” sê hy. “Dis ongelooflik! Dis so reusagtig! En so … dis half moeilik om in woorde te beskryf, dis so vreeslik deftig, veral die kandelare en die matte en alles! Die Hoofhotelbestuurder, meneer Martin M. Matt, staan nou hier langs my. Hy wil vreeslik graag ’n woordjie met u wissel, meneer.” “Laat hom praat,” sê die President.
“Meneer die President, meneer, dit is Martin Matt. Wat
’n weelderige hotel! Die binneversiering is voortreflik!” “Het jy agtergekom al die matte is muur-tot-muur,
meneer Martin Matt?” vra die President.
“Ek het inderdaad, Meneer die President.”
“Al die muurpapier is ook muur-tot-muur, meneer
Martin Matt.”
“Ja meneer, Meneer die President. Dis wonderlik! Dit gaan voorwaar

’n plesier wees om so ’n pragtige hotel te bestuur! … Haai! Wat gaan daar aan? Daar kom iets by die hysers uit! Help!” Skielik gee die luidspreker in die President se studeerkamer ’n reeks bloedstollende gille en jille. “Einaaaaa! Auuuuu! Einaaaaa! Hel-llp! Hel-U-l-lp! HeUlUU-Up!”
“Wat op aarde gaan aan?” vra die President. “Shuckworth!
Is jy daar, Shuckworth? … Shanks! Showier! Meneer Martin
Matt! Waar is julle almal? Wat gaan aan?”

Die gegil hou aan. Dit word só hard dat die President sy vingers in sy ore moet druk. Elke huis in die wêreld wat ’n televisie of radio het, hoor die angswekkende gille. Daar is ander geluide ook. ’n Harde gegrom en gesnork en geslurp. Dan is dit stil.
Die President probeer die Ruimtehotel koorsagtig oor die radio kontak. Houston probeer die Ruimtehotel kontak. Die President kontak Houston. Houston kontak die President. Dan probeer hulle albei weer die Ruimtehotel kontak. Maar niemand antwoord nie. Daar ver bo in die ruimte is dit doodstil.
“Daar het iets aakligs gebeur,” sê die President.
“Dis daai Marsmanne,” sê die Ekshoofvan die Leër. “Ek het mos gesé u moet dat ek hulle in die lug op blaas.”
“Stilte!” snou die President hom toe. “Ek moet dink.” Die luidspreker begin kraak. “Hallo!” sê dit. “Hallo-hallo-hallo! Hoor julle my, Ruimtebeheer in Houston?” Die President gryp die mikrofoon op sy lessenaar. “Laat
(.lit aan my oor, Houston!” skree hy. “President Gilligrass hier, ek hoor jou hard en duidelik! Gaan voort!”
“Dis ruimtevaarder Shuckworth hier, Meneer die
President. Ek is terug aan boord van die Vervoerkapsule
… Dank die hemell”
“Wat het gebeur, Shuckworth? Wie is by jou?”
“Ek is dankbaar om te sê die meeste van ons is hier, Meneer die President. Shanks en Showier is by my, en ’n hele paar ander mense. Ek skat ons het altesaam maar net so twee dosyn mense verloor, kokke, portiers, daai soort van ding. Dit was omtrént ’n geskarrel om lewendig uit daai plek te kom!”
“Wat bedoel jy julle het twee dosyn mense verloor?” gil
die President. “Hoe het julle hulle verloor?”
“Hulle’s opgeslurp!” antwoord Shuckworth. “Een sluk en dit was klaarpraat! Ek het gesien hoe word ’n groot, ses voet lange assistentbestuurder ingesluk soos wat mens
’n roomys sal insluk, Meneer die President! Geen gekou
nie - niks nie! Net so heel ingesluk!”
“Deur wiel” skree die President. “Van wie praat jy? Wie’t hulle

ingesluk?”
“Wag bietjie!” skree Shuckworth. “O goeie genade, hier kom hulle nou! Hulle kom agter ons aan! Swerms van hulle! U sal my ’n oomblik moet verskoon, Meneer die President. Ek het nie nou tyd vir gesels nie!”

Transport Capsule in Trouble — Attack No. 1

While Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler were being chased out of the Space Hotel by the Knids, Mr Wonka’s Great Glass Elevator was orbiting the Earth at tremendous speed. Mr Wonka had all his booster-rockets firing and the Elevator was reaching speeds of thirty-four thousand miles an hour instead of the normal seventeen thousand. They were trying, you see, to get away from that huge angry Vermicious Knid with the purple behind. Mr Wonka wasn’t afraid of it, but Grandma Josephine was petrified. Every time she looked at it, she let out a piercing scream and clapped her hands over her eyes. But of course thirty-four thousand miles an hour is dawdling to a Knid. Healthy young Knids think nothing of travelling a million miles between lunch and supper, and then another million before breakfast the next day. How else could they travel between the planet Vermes and other stars? Mr Wonka should have known this and saved his rocket-power, but he kept right on going and the giant Knid kept right on cruising effortlessly alongside, glaring into the Elevator with its wicked red eye. ‘You people have bruised my backside,’ the Knid seemed to be saying, ‘and in the end I’m going to get you for that.’

They had been streaking around the Earth like this for about forty-five minutes when Charlie, who was floating comfortably beside Grandpa Joe near the ceiling, said suddenly, ‘There’s something ahead! Can you see it, Grandpa? Straight in front of us!’

‘I can, Charlie, I can … Good heavens, it’s the Space Hotel!’

‘It can’t be, Grandpa. We left it miles behind us long ago.’

‘Ah-ha,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘We’ve been going so fast we’ve gone all the way around the Earth and caught up with it again! A splendid effort!’

‘And there’s the Transport Capsule! Can you see it, Grandpa? It’s just behind the Space Hotel!’

‘There’s something else there, too, Charlie, if I’m not mistaken!’

'I know what those are!' screamed Grandma Josephine. 'They're Vermicious Knids! Turn back at once!'

'Reverse!' yelled Grandma Georgina. 'Go the other way!'

'Dear lady,' said Mr Wonka. 'This isn't a car on the motorway. When you are in orbit, you cannot stop and you cannot go backwards.'

'I don't care about that!' shouted Grandma Josephine. 'Put on the brakes! Stop! Back-pedal! The Knids'll get us!'

'Now let's for heaven's sake stop this nonsense once and for all,' Mr Wonka said sternly. 'You know very well my Elevator is completely Knidproof. You have nothing to fear.'

They were closer now and they could see the Knids pouring out from the tail of the Space Hotel and swarming like wasps around the Transport Capsule.

'They're attacking it!' cried Charlie. 'They're after the Transport Capsule!'

It was a fearsome sight. The huge green egg-shaped Knids were grouping themselves into squadrons with about twenty Knids to a squadron. Then each squadron formed itself into a line abreast, with one yard between Knids. Then, one after another, the squadrons began attacking the Transport Capsule. They attacked in reverse with their pointed rear-ends in front and they came in at a fantastic speed.

WHAM! One squadron attacked, bounced off and wheeled away.

CRASH! Another squadron smashed against the side of the Transport Capsule.

'Get us out of here, you madman!' screamed Grandma Josephine. 'What are you waiting for?'

'They'll be coming after us next!' yelled Grandma Georgina. 'For heaven's sake, man, turn back!'

'I doubt very much if that capsule of theirs is Knidproof,' said Mr Wonka.

'Then we must help them!' cried Charlie. 'We've got to do something!

There are a hundred and fifty people inside that thing!'

Down on the Earth, in the White House study, the President and his advisers were listening in horror to the voices of the astronauts over the radio.

'They're coming at us in droves!' Shuckworth was shouting. 'They're bashing us to bits!'

'But who?' yelled the President. 'You haven't even told us who's attacking you!'

'These dirty great greenish-brown brutes with red eyes!' shouted Shanks, butting in. 'They're shaped like enormous eggs and they're coming at us backwards!'

'Backwards?' cried the President. 'Why backwards?'

'Because their bottoms are even more pointy than their tops!' shouted Shuckworth. 'Look out! Here comes another lot!' BANG! 'We won't be able to stand this much longer, Mr President! The waitresses are screaming and the chambermaids are all hysterical and the bell-boys are being sick and the hall porters are saying their prayers so what shall we do, Mr President, sir, what on earth shall we do?'

'Fire your rockets, you idiot, and make a re-entry!' shouted the President. 'Come back to Earth immediately!'

'That's impossible!' cried Showler. 'They've busted our rockets! They've smashed them to smithereens!'

'We're cooked, Mr President!' shouted Shanks. 'We're done for! Because even if they don't succeed in destroying the capsule, we'll have to stay up here in orbit for the rest of our lives! We can't make a re-entry without rockets!'

The President was sweating and the sweat ran all the way down the back of his neck and inside his collar.

'Any moment now, Mr President,' Shanks went on, 'we're going to lose contact with you altogether! There's another lot coming at us from the left and they're aiming straight for our radio aerial! Here they come! I don't think we'll be able to …' The voice cut. The radio went dead.

'Shanks!' cried the President. 'Where are you, Shanks? … Shuckworth! Shanks! Showler! … Showlworth! Shucks! Shankler! … Shankworth! Show! Shuckler! Why don't you answer me?!'

Up in the Great Glass Elevator where they had no radio and could hear nothing of these conversations, Charlie was saying, 'Surely their only hope is to make a re-entry and dive back to Earth quickly!'

'Yes,' said Mr Wonka. 'But in order to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere they've got to kick themselves out of orbit. They've got to change course and head downwards and to do that they need rockets! But their rocket tubes are all dented and bent! You can see that from here! They're crippled!'

'Why can't we tow them down?' Charlie asked.

Mr Wonka jumped. Even though he was floating, he somehow jumped. He was so excited he shot upwards and hit his head on the ceiling. Then he spun round three times in the air and cried, 'Charlie! You've got it! That's it! We'll tow them out of orbit! To the buttons, quick!'

'What do we tow them with?' asked Grandpa Joe. 'Our neckties?'

'Don't you worry about a little thing like that!' cried Mr Wonka. 'My Great Glass Elevator is ready for anything! In we go! Into the breach, dear friends, into the breach!'

'Stop him!' screamed Grandma Josephine.

'You be quiet, Josie,' said Grandpa Joe. 'There's someone over there needs a helping hand and it's our job to give it. If you're frightened, you'd better just close your eyes tight and stick your fingers in your ears.'

Vervoerkapsule in gevaar - Aanval no. 1

Terwyl die Wroete vir Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier uit die Ruimtehotel verwilder, wentel meneer Wonka se Groot Glashyser teen 'n geweldige spoed om die Aarde. Meneer Wonka se aanjaagvuurpyle werk almal oortyd en die hyser se spoed is nou vier-en-dertigduisend myl per uur pleks van die gewone sewentienduisend. Jy sien, hulle probeer wegkom van daardie yslike, woedende WurmWroet met die pers agterstewe. Meneer Wonka is nie bang vir hom nie, maar ouma

Josephine is paniekbevange. Elke keer wat sy na die ding kyk, los sy 'n deurdringende gil en druk haar oë met haar hande toe. Maar vier-en-dertigduisend myl per uur is natuurlik 'n drafstappie vir 'n Wroet. Gesonde jong Wroete dink niks daarvan om 'n miljoen myl tussen middag-en aandete af te lê nie, en dan sommer nóg 'n miljoen voor ontbyt die volgende dag. Hoe anders kan hulle tussen die planeet Wurmus en ander sterre rondrits? Meneer Wonka moes dit geweet en van die vuurpylkrag vir later gespaar het, maar hy vuur die een na die ander af en die reuseWroet hou moeiteloos by en gluur met sy bose rooi oog by die Glashyser in. Dit lyk asof die Wroet sê: "Julle mense het my has gekneus, en ek gaan julle daarvoor laat boet."

Hulle flits al amper vyf-en-veertig minute lank om die Aarde toe Charlie, wat heel gemaklik saam met oupa Joe naby die dak rondsweef, skielik sê: "Daar's iets daar voor! Kan Oupa dit sien? Daar reg voor ons!"
"Ek kan, Charlie, ek kan … Goeie genade, dis die
Ruimtehotel!"
"Dit kan nie wees nie, Oupa. Dit lê al myle ver agter ons*
"Aha," sê meneer Wonka. "Ons vlieg so vinnig dat ons al heelpad om die Aarde is en nou al weer by die Ruimtehotel uitkom! 'n Pragtige prestasie!"
"En daar's die Vervoerkapsule! Sien Oupa dit? Dis net
agter die Ruimtehotel!"
"Daar's iets anders ook daar, Charlie, as ek my nie misgis nie.
"Ek weet wat daai goed is!" skree ouma Josephine. "Dis
WurmWroete! Draai onmiddellik om!"

"Sit die ding in trurat!" gil ouma Georgina. "Gaan terug!"
"Geagte dame," sê meneer Wonka, "ons is nie in 'n
motor op die snelweg nie. Wanneer jy in 'n wentelbaan is, kan jy nie stop nie en jy kan ook nie na trurat oorskakel nie."
"Dit traak my nie!" skree ouma Josephine. "Trap rem!
Stop! Gaan terug! Die Wroete gaan ons gryp!"
"Hou om hemelswil nou eens en vir altyd op met hierdie snert," sê meneer Wonka streng. "U weet goed my hyser is geheel en al Wroetbestand. U het niks te vrese nie."
Hulle is nou nader en hulle sien hoe die Wroete agter
hy die Ruimtehotel uitpeul en soos 'n swerm bye om die
Vervoerkapsule saamkoek.
"I lulle val aan!" gil Charlie. "Hulle is agter die
Vervoerkapsule aan! "
Dis 'n vreesaanjaende gesig. Die yslike groen, eiervormige Wroete werk saam in pelotons van omtrent twintig elk. Elke peloton se

Wroete vorm ’n ry met omtrent ’n tree tussen hulle. Dan begin die pelotons die Vervoerkapsule die een na die ander aanval. Hulle slaan toe met hul gepunte agterkante na voor en storm teen ’n duiselingwekkende spoed.
KADWAR! Een peloton val aan, spat weg en retireer.
KAWHAR RA! Die volgende peloton vlieg in die
Vervoerkapsule se kant vas.
“Kry ons hier weg, jou mal man!” gil ouma Josephine. “Waarvoor wag jy nog?”
“Hulle gaan ons volgende aanval!” skree ouma Georgina. “Om liefdeswil, man, draai om!”
“Ek twyfel sterk of daardie kapsule van hulle
Wroetbestand is,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Dan moet ons hulle help!” roep Charlie uit. “Ons moet iets doen! Daar is honderd en vyftig mense in daai kapsule!”
Onder op die Aarde, in die Withuis se studeerkamer, luister die President en sy raadgewers met afgryse vervul oor die radio na die ruimtevaarders se stemme.
“Hulle bestorm ons in hordes!” skree Shuckworth. “Hulle slaan ons flenters!” Hulle verpletter ons!”
“Maar wie’s dit?” gil die President. “Julle’t nog nie eens
vir ons gesê wie julle aanval nie!”
“Daardie vieslike groot groenerige bruin ongediertes met die rooi oë!” skree Shanks voor die President verder kan praat. “Hulle lyk soos enorme eiers en hulle storm agteruit op ons af!”
“Agteruit?” gil die President. “Hoekom agteruit? “Omdat hul onderkante skerper is as hul bokante!”
skree Shuckworth. “Oppas! Hier kom nóg ’n spul!” KADWAR! “Ons sal dit nie baie langer kan uithou nie, Meneer die President! Die kelnerinne skree en die kamermeisies is almal histeries en die hoteljoggies gooi op en die ontvangsklerke sê gebedjies op, so wat moet ons doen, Meneer die President, meneer? Wat op aarde moet ons doen?”
“Skiet julle vuurpyle at, jou idioot, en dring weer die
Aarde se atmosfeer binne!” bulder die President. “Kom op die daad terug Aarde toe!”
“Dis onmoontlik!” skree Showier. “Hulle’t ons vuurpyle
vernietig! Hulle’t dit fyn en flenters gestamp!”
“Dis verby met ons, Meneer die President!” gil Shanks. “Dis klaarpraat! Want selfs al kry hulle dit nie reg om die kapsule te vernietig nie sal ons vir die res van ons lewens hier bo in ’n wentelbaan moet bly! Ons kan die Aarde se atmosfeer nie sonder vuurpyle binnedring me!
Die President sweet en die sweet loop heelpad agter sy

nek af en by sy kraag in.
“Dis nou enige oomblik, Meneer die President,” gaan Shanks aan, “dan sal ons heeltemal kontak met u verloor! Daar storm ’n klomp van hulle op ons linkerkant af en hulle mik reguit vir die radio se lugdraad! Hier kom hulle! Ek dink nie ons sal kan …” Die stem word afgesny. Die radio gaan dood.
“Shanks!” roep die President. “Waar is jy, Shanks? …
Shuckworth! Shanks! Showier! … Showlworth! Shucks! Shankler! … Shanworth! Show! Shuckler! Hoekom antwoord julle my nie?!”
Bo in die Groot Glashyser waar hulle nie ’n radio het on niks van hierdie gesprekke kan hoor nie, sê Charlie:
“Hulle enigste hoop is seker om die Aarde se atmosfeer weer binne te dring en vinnig af ondertoe te duik.”
“Ja,” sê meneer Wonka. “Maar om die Aarde se atmosfeer weer binne te dring moet hulle hulself uit die wentelbaan skop. Hulle moet van koers verander en ondertoe duik en daarvoor het hulle vuurpyle nodig. Maar hul vuurpyle is almal geduik en gebuig! Mens kan dit van hier af sien. Hulle is lamgelê!”
“Hoekom kan ons hulle nie ondertoe sleep nie?” vra
Charlie.
Meneer Wonka wip. Selfs al sweef hy, wip hy. Hy is só opgewonde dat hy boontoe skiet en sy kop teen die dak stamp. Dan tol hy drie keer in die lug in die rondte en skree: “Ditsem, Charlie! Dis die antwoord! Ons neem hulle op sleeptou! Knoppies toe, gou!”
“Waarmee gaan ons hulle sleep?” vra oupa Joe. “Ons dasse?”
“Moenie u oor so ’n nietigheidjie bekommer nie!” roep meneer Wonka uit. “My Groot Glashyser is tot enigiets in staat! Kom ons doen dit! Tot hul redding, my vriende, tot hul redding!”
“Keer hom!” gil ouma Josephine.
“Stil nou, Josie,” sê oupa Joe. “Daar’s mense wat ’n helpende hand nodig het en dis ons werk om dit na hulle toe uit te steek. As jy bang is, moet jy liewer jou oë toemaak en jou vingers in jou ore druk.”

The Battle of the Knids

‘Grandpa Joe, sir!’ shouted Mr Wonka. ‘Kindly jet yourself over to the far corner of the Elevator there and turn that handle! It lowers the rope!’

‘A rope’s no good, Mr Wonka! The Knids will bite through a rope in one second!’

‘It’s a steel rope,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘It’s made of re-inscorched steel. If they try to bite through that their teeth will splinter like spillikins! To

your buttons, Charlie! You've got to help me manoeuvre! We're going right over the top of the Transport Capsule and then we'll try to hook on to it somewhere and get a firm hold!'

Like a battleship going into action, the Great Glass Elevator with booster rockets firing moved smoothly in over the top of the enormous Transport Capsule. The Knids immediately stopped attacking the Capsule and went for the Elevator. Squadron after squadron of giant Vermicious Knids flung themselves furiously against Mr Wonka's marvellous machine! WHAM! CRASH! BANG! The noise was thunderous and terrible. The Elevator was tossed about the sky like a leaf, and inside it, Grandma Josephine, Grandma Georgina and Grandpa George, floating in their nightshirts, were all yowling and screeching and flapping their arms and calling for help. Mrs Bucket had wrapped her arms around Mr Bucket and was clasping him so tightly that one of his shirt buttons punctured his skin. Charlie and Mr Wonka, as cool as two cubes of ice, were up near the ceiling working the booster-rocket controls, and Grandpa Joe, shouting war-cries and throwing curses at the Knids, was down below turning the handle that unwound the steel rope. At the same time, he was watching the rope through the glass floor of the Elevator.

'Starboard a bit, Charlie!' shouted Grandpa Joe. 'We're right on top of her now! … Forward a couple of yards, Mr Wonka! … I'm trying to get the hook hooked around that stumpy thing sticking out in front there! … Hold it! … I've got it … That's it! … Forward a little now and see if it holds! … More! … More! …' The big steel rope tightened. It held! And now, wonder of wonders, with her booster-rockets blazing, the Elevator began to tow the huge Transport Capsule forward and away!

'Full speed ahead!' shouted Grandpa Joe. 'She's going to hold! She's holding! She's holding fine!'

'All boosters firing!' cried Mr Wonka, and the Elevator leaped ahead. Still the rope held. Mr Wonka jetted himself down to Grandpa Joe and shook him warmly by the hand. 'Well done, sir,' he said. 'You did a brilliant job under heavy fire!'

Charlie looked back at the Transport Capsule some thirty yards behind them on the end of the tow-line. It had little windows up front, and in the windows he could clearly see the flabbergasted faces of Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler. Charlie waved to them and gave them the thumbs-up signal. They didn't wave back. They simply

gaped. They couldn't believe what was happening.

Grandpa Joe blew himself upward and hovered beside Charlie, bubbling with excitement. 'Charlie, my boy,' he said. 'We've been through a few funny things together lately, but never anything like this!'

'Grandpa, where are the Knids? They've suddenly vanished!'

Everyone looked round. The only Knid in sight was their old friend with the purple behind, still cruising alongside in its usual place, still glaring into the Elevator.

'Just a minute!' cried Grandma Josephine. 'What's that I see over there?' Again they looked, and this time, sure enough, away in the distance, in the deep blue sky of outer space, they saw a massive cloud of Vermicious Knids wheeling and circling like a fleet of bombers.

'If you think we're out of the woods yet, you're crazy!' shouted Grandma Georgina.

'I fear no Knids!' said Mr Wonka. 'We've got them beaten now!'

'Poppyrot and pigwash!' said Grandma Josephine. 'Any moment now they'll be at us again! Look at them! They're coming in! They're coming closer!'

This was true. The huge fleet of Knids had moved in at incredible speed and was now flying level with the Great Glass Elevator, a couple of hundred yards away on the right-hand side. The one with the bump on its rear-end was much closer, only twenty yards away on the same side.

'It's changing shape!' cried Charlie. 'That nearest one! What's it going to do? It's getting longer and longer!' And indeed it was. The mammoth egg-shaped body was slowly stretching itself out like chewing-gum, becoming longer and longer and thinner and thinner, until in the end it looked exactly like a long slimy-green serpent as thick as a thick tree and as long as a football pitch. At the front end were the eyes, big and white with red centres, at the back a kind of tapering tail and at the very end of the tail was the enormous round swollen bump it had got when it crashed against the glass.

The people floating inside the Elevator watched and waited. Then

they saw the long rope-like Knid turning and coming straight but quite slowly toward the Great Glass Elevator. Now it began actually wrapping its ropy body around the Elevator itself. Once around it went … then twice around, and very horrifying it was to be inside and to see the soft green body squishing against the outside of the glass no more than a few inches away.

'It's tying us up like a parcel!' yelled Grandma Josephine.

'Bunkum!' said Mr Wonka.

'It's going to crush us in its coils!' wailed Grandma Georgina.

'Never!' said Mr Wonka.

Charlie glanced quickly back at the Transport Capsule. The sheet-white faces of Shuckworth, Shanks and Showler were pressed against the glass of the little windows, terror-struck, stupefied, stunned, their mouths open, their expressions frozen like fish fingers. Once again, Charlie gave them the thumbs-up signal. Showler acknowledged it with a sickly grin, but that was all.

'Oh, oh, oh!' screamed Grandma Josephine. 'Get that beastly squishy thing away from here!'

Having curled its body twice around the Elevator, the Knid now proceeded to tie a knot with its two ends, a good strong knot, left over right, then right over left. When it had pulled the knot tight, there remained about five yards of one end hanging loose. This was the end with the eyes on it. But it didn't hang loose for long. It quickly curled itself into the shape of a huge hook and the hook stuck straight out sideways from the Elevator as though waiting for something else to hook itself on to it.

While all this was going on, nobody had noticed what the other Knids were up to. 'Mr Wonka!' Charlie cried. 'Look at the others! What are they doing?'

What indeed?

These, too, had all changed shape and had become longer, but not nearly so long or so thin as the first one. Each of them had turned itself into a kind of thick rod and the rod was curled around at both ends — at the tail end and at the head end — so that it made a

double-ended hook. And now all the hooks were linking up into one long chain … one thousand Knids … all joining together and curving around in the sky to make a chain of Knids half a mile long or more! And the Knid at the very front of the chain (whose front hook was not, of course, hooked up to anything) was leading them in a wide circle and sweeping in toward the Great Glass Elevator.

'Hey!' shouted Grandpa Joe. 'They're going to hook up with this brute who's tied himself around us!'

'And tow us away!' cried Charlie.

'To the planet Vermes,' gasped Grandma Josephine. 'Eighteen thousand four hundred and twenty-seven million miles from here!'

'They can't do that!' cried Mr Wonka. 'We're doing the towing around here!'

'They're going to link up, Mr Wonka!' Charlie said. 'They really are! Can't we stop them? They're going to tow us away and they're going to tow the people we're towing away as well!'

'Do something, you old fool!' shrieked Grandma Georgina. 'Don't just float about looking at them!'

'I must admit,' said Mr Wonka, 'that for the first time in my life I find myself at a bit of a loss.'

They all stared in horror through the glass at the long chain of Vermicious Knids. The leader of the chain was coming closer and closer. The hook, with two big angry eyes on it, was out and ready. In thirty seconds it would link up with the hook of the Knid wrapped around the Elevator.

'I want to go home!' wailed Grandma Josephine. 'Why can't we all go home?'

'Great thundering tomcats!' cried Mr Wonka. 'Home is right! What on earth am I thinking of! Come on, Charlie! Quick! Re-entry! You take the yellow button! Press it for all you're worth! I'll handle this lot!' Charlie and Mr Wonka literally flew to the buttons. 'Hold your hats!' shouted Mr Wonka. 'Grab your gizzards! We're going down!'

Rockets started firing out of the Elevator from all sides. It tilted and

gave a sickening lurch and then plunged downward into the Earth's atmosphere at a simply colossal speed. 'Retro-rockets!' bellowed Mr Wonka. 'I mustn't forget to fire the retro-rockets!' He flew over to another series of buttons and started playing on them like a piano.

The Elevator was now streaking downward head first, upside down, and all the passengers found themselves floating upside down as well. 'Help!' screamed Grandma Georgina. 'All the blood's going to my head!'

'Then turn yourself the other way up,' said Mr Wonka. 'That's easy enough, isn't it?'

Everyone blew and puffed and turned somersaults in the air until at last they were all the right way up. 'How's the tow-rope holding, Grandpa?' Mr Wonka called out.

'They're still with us, Mr Wonka, sir! The rope's holding fine!'

It was an amazing sight — the Glass Elevator streaking down toward the Earth with the huge Transport Capsule in tow behind it. But the long chain of Knids was coming after them, following them down, keeping pace with them easily, and now the hook of the leading Knid in the chain was actually reaching out and grasping for the hook made by the Knid on the Elevator!

'We're too late!' screamed Grandma Georgina. 'They're going to link up and haul us back!'

'I think not,' said Mr Wonka. 'Don't you remember what happens when a Knid enters the Earth's atmosphere at high speed? He gets red-hot. He burns away in a long fiery trail. He becomes a shooting Knid. Soon these dirty beasts will start popping like popcorn!'

As they streaked on downward, sparks began to fly off the sides of the Elevator. The glass glowed pink, then red, then scarlet. Sparks also began to fly on the long chain of Knids, and the leading Knid in the chain started to shine like a red-hot poker. So did all the others. So did the great slimy brute coiled around the Elevator itself. This one, in fact, was trying frantically to uncoil itself and get away, but it was having trouble untying the knot, and in another ten seconds it began to sizzle. Inside the Elevator they could actually hear it sizzling. It made a noise like bacon frying. And exactly the same sort of thing was happening to the other one thousand Knids in the chain. The

tremendous heat was simply sizzling them up. They were red-hot, every one of them. Then suddenly, they became white-hot and they gave out a dazzling white light.

'They're shooting Knids!' cried Charlie.

'What a splendid sight,' said Mr Wonka. 'It's better than fireworks.'

In a few seconds more, the Knids had blown away in a cloud of ashes and it was all over. 'We've done it!' cried Mr Wonka. 'They've been roasted to a crisp! They've been frizzled to a fritter! We're saved!'

'What do you mean saved?' said Grandma Josephine. 'We'll all be frizzled ourselves if this goes on any longer! We'll be barbecued like beefsteaks! Look at that glass! It's hotter than a fizzgig!'

'Have no fears, dear lady,' answered Mr Wonka. 'My Elevator is air-conditioned, ventilated, aerated and automated in every possible way. We're going to be all right now.'

'I haven't the faintest idea what's been going on,' said Mrs Bucket, making one of her rare speeches. 'But whatever it is, I don't like it.'

'Aren't you enjoying it, Mother?' Charlie asked her.

'No,' she said. 'I'm not. Nor is your father.'

'What a great sight it is!' said Mr Wonka. 'Just look at the Earth down there, Charlie, getting bigger and bigger!'

'And us going to meet it at two thousand miles an hour!' groaned Grandma Georgina. 'How are you going to slow down, for heaven's sake? You didn't think of that, did you!'

'He's got parachutes,' Charlie told her. 'I'll bet he's got great big parachutes that open just before we hit.'

'Parachutes!' said Mr Wonka with contempt. 'Parachutes are only for astronauts and sissies! And anyway, we don't want to slow down. We want to speed up. I've told you already we've got to be going at an absolutely tremendous speed when we hit. Otherwise we'll never punch our way in through the roof of the Chocolate Factory.'

'How about the Transport Capsule?' Charlie asked anxiously.

‘We’ll be letting them go in a few seconds now,’ Mr Wonka answered. ‘They do have parachutes, three of them, to slow them down on the last bit.’

‘How do you know we won’t land in the Pacific Ocean?’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘I don’t,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘But we all know how to swim, do we not?’

‘This man,’ shouted Grandma Josephine, ‘is crazy as a crumpet!’

‘He’s cracked as a crayfish!’ cried Grandma Georgina.

Down and down plunged the Great Glass Elevator. Nearer and nearer came the Earth below. Oceans and continents rushed up to meet them, getting bigger every second …

‘Grandpa Joe, sir! Throw out the rope! Let it go!’ ordered Mr Wonka. ‘They’ll be all right now so long as their parachutes are working.’

‘Rope gone!’ called out Grandpa Joe, and the huge Transport Capsule, on its own now, began to swing away to one side. Charlie waved to the three astronauts in the front window. None of them waved back. They were still sitting there in a kind of shocked daze, gaping at the old ladies and the old men and the small boy floating about in the Glass Elevator.

‘It won’t be long now,’ said Mr Wonka, reaching for a row of tiny pale blue buttons in one corner. ‘We shall soon know whether we are alive or dead. Keep very quiet please for this final bit. I have to concentrate awfully hard, otherwise we’ll come down in the wrong place.’

They plunged into a thick bank of cloud and for ten seconds they could see nothing. When they came out of the cloud, the Transport Capsule had disappeared, and the Earth was very close, and there was only a great spread of land beneath them with mountains and forests … then fields and trees … then a small town.

‘There it is!’ shouted Mr Wonka. ‘My Chocolate Factory! My beloved Chocolate Factory!’

‘You mean Charlie’s Chocolate Factory,’ said Grandpa Joe.

‘That’s right!’ said Mr Wonka, addressing Charlie. ‘I’d clean forgotten! I do apologize to you, my dear boy! Of course it’s yours! And here we go!’

Through the glass floor of the Elevator, Charlie caught a quick glimpse of the huge red roof and the tall chimneys of the giant factory. They were plunging straight down on to it.

‘Hold your breath!’ shouted Mr Wonka. ‘Hold your nose! Fasten your seat-belts and say your prayers! We’re going through the roof!’

Die Slag van die Wroete

“Oupa Joe!” roep meneer Wonka. “Wees so vriendelik en skiet uself oor tot in die verste hoek van die hyser daar oorkant en draai daardie slinger! Dit sal die tou laat sak!”
“Tou gaan nie werk nie, meneer Wonka! Die Wroete sal hinne ’n sekonde daardeur kou!”
“Dis ’n staaltou,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis van brandstaal gemaak. As hulle daardeur probeer kou, sal hul tande soos splinters versplinter! Na jou knoppies toe, Charlie! Jy moet my help maneuvreer. Ons gaan bo-oor die Vervoerkapsule beweeg en dan kyk of ons dit iewers daaraan kan vashaak!”
Soos ’n oorlogskip wat tot aksie oorgaan, word die Groot Glashyser se aanjaagvuurpyle afgeskiet en hulle glip gemaklik tot bokant die enorme Vervoerkapsule. Die Wroete hou dadelik op om die kapsule aan te val en bestorm die hyser. Peloton ná peloton reusagtige Wurrn-Wroete werp hulself woedend teen meneer Wonka se wonderbaarlike masjien! KADWAR! KAWHAM! KADWARRAWHAM! Die geraas is oorverdowend en angswekkend. Die hyser word soos ’n blaar in die lug rondgegooi en binne-in sweef ouma Josephine, ouma
Georgina en oupa George in hul nagkabaaie rond en kerm en krys en flap hul arms en skree om hulp. Mevrou Bucket se arms is om meneer Bucket en sy klou só styf aan hom vas dat een van sy hempsknope sy vel sny. Charlie en meneer Wonka, so koel soos twee komkommers, werkbo naby die dak met die aanjaagvuurpyle se beheerknoppies en oupa Joe gil oorlogskrete en vervloek die Wroete. Hy draai die slinger om die staaltou te laat afsak en kyk deur die hyser se glasvloer hoe hulle vorder.
“Bietjie meer stuurboord toe, Charlie!” roep oupa Joe. “Ons is nou reg bokant hulle! … Nog ’n paar tree vorentoe, meneer Wonka! … Ek wil die tou om daai stomp ding wat daar uitsteek, haak! … Wag bietjie! … Het hom! … Daar’s hy! … Bietjie vorentoe nou, dan kyk ons of dit hou! … Nog! … Nóg! …” Die groot staaltou trek stywer. Dit hou! En

nou, wonder bo wonder, begin die Glashyser met sy vlammende aanjaagvuurpyle om die yslike Vervoerkapsule vorentoe en weg te trek!
"Volspoed vorentoe!" skree oupa Joe. "Die tou gaan hou! Hy hou! Hy hou goed!"
"Ontbrand al die aanjaagvuurpyle!" skree meneer Wonka en die hyser spring vorentoe. Die tou hou nog steeds. Meneer Wonka sak af na oupa Joe toe en skud sy hand hartlik. "Knap gedaan, Oupa," sê hy. "U het u briljant van u taak gekwyt, onder hewige druk!"
Charlie kyk terug na die Vervoerkapsule aan die punt
van die sleeptou omtrent dertig tree agter hulle. Deur die klein venstertjies voorin kan hy Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier se verblufte gesigte duidelik sien. Charlie waai en wys vir hulle die houmoed-teken met sy duim. Hulle waai nie terug nie. Hulle gaap hom net aan. Hulle kan nie glo wat gebeur nie.
Oupa Joe blaas homself boontoe en kom hang langs Charlie. "Charlie, ou seun," sê hy en borrel omtrent oor van opgewondenheid, "ons het die afgelope tyd al 'n paar vreemde dinge saam meegemaak, maar niks kom hierby nie!"
"Oupa, waar is die Wroete? Hulle't net skielik verdwyn!"
Almal kyk om. Die enigste Wroet in sig is hul ou vriend met die pers agterstewe wat nog steeds soos vroeër saam met hulle vlieg en nog steeds by die hyser ingluur.
"Net 'n oomblik!" roep ouma Josephine uit. "Wat's dit wat ek daar anderkant sien?" Hulle kyk weer, en hierdie keer, sowaar as wraggies, daar in die verte, in die buitenste ruim se diepblou lug, sien hulle 'n massiewe wolk WurmWroete rol en tol soos 'n vloot bomwerpers.
"As julle dink ons is buite gevaar, is julle verkeerd!" gil ouma Georgina.
"Ek skrik nie vir Wroete nie!" kondig meneer Wonka aan. "Ons het vir hulle ore aangesit!"
"Bog, snert en twak!" sê ouma Josephine. "Hulle gaan ons nou enige oomblik weer bykom! Kyk na hulle! Hulle pyl op ons af! Hulle kom nader!"
En dis waar. Die yslike vloot Wroete beweeg teen
'n ongelooflike spoed en vlieg nou langs die Groot Glashyser, net 'n paar honderd tree van die regterkant af. Die een met die knopstert is baie nader, skaars twintig tree, aan dieselfde kant.
"Hy verander van vorm!" gil Charlie. "Daai een naaste aan ons! Wat gaan hy doen? Hy raak al langer en langer!" En dis waar. Die kolossale, eiervormige lyf rek nou soos kougom uit en word langer en langer en dunner en dunner, totdat dit op die ou end lyk presies
soos 'n lang, glibberige groen slang so dik soos 'n dik boomstam en so lank soos 'n sokkerveld. Vooraan is die oë, groot en wit met rooi

pupille, agter 'n soort stert wat geleidelik dunner word en reg agter aan die punt van die stert die yslike, ronde, opgeswelde knop waar hy die Glashyser getref het.
Die mense wat in die hyser rondsweef, kyk en wag. Dan
sien hulle hoe die lang, touagtige Wroet omdraai en reguit maar nogal stadig na die Groot Glashyser toe aankom. Dan begin hy sy touerige lyf om die Glashyser krul. Een keer om … dan 'n tweede keer, en dis vreesaanjaend om binne-in te wees en te sien hoe die sagte groen lyf net
'n paar duim van jou af teen die buitekant van die glas
vassuig.
"Hy knoop ons soos 'n pakkie toe!" gil ouma
Josephine.
"Onsin!" sê meneer Wonka.
"Hy gaan ons met sy wurmlyf papdruk!" kerm ouma
Georgina.
"Nooit!" sê meneer Wonka.
Charlie loer vinnig terug na die Vervoerkapsule. Shuckworth, Shanks en Showier se lakenwit gesigte is teen die klein venstertjies se glas vasgedruk; hulle lyk angsbevange, verbyster, verstom, hul monde oop, hul uitdrukkings gevries soos visvingers. Charlie wys weer vir hulle die houmoed-teken. Showier beantwoord dit met
'n flou grynslaggie, maar dis al.
"O, o, o!" skree ouma Josephine. "Kry daardie aaklige, slymerige ding hier weg!"
Noudat die Wroet sy lyf twee keer om die hyser gekrul
het, maak hy 'n knoop met sy twee punte, 'n goeie, sterk knoop, links oor regs, dan regs oor links. Hy trek die
knoop styf en daar bly nog 'n los stuk oor. Dit is die stxik met die oë in. Maar dit hang nie vir lank so los nie. Dit krul op in die vorm van 'n reusehaak asof dit wag vir iets om aan vas te haak.
Terwyl dit alles aan die gang is, kom niemand agter wat die ander Wroete aanvang nie. "Meneer Wonka!" gil Charlie. "Kyk vir die ander! Wat doen hulle?"
Ja, wat?
Hulle het intussen ook almal van vorm verander en langer geword, maar nie naastenby so lank of so dun soos die eerste een nie. Elkeen van hulle het homself in 'n soort dik kabel verander en die kabel se punte is albei omgebuig - aan die agteren aan die voorkant - sodat elkeen 'n haak vorm. En nou haak al die hake by mekaar in en vorm een lang ketting … eenduisend Wroete … almal haak bymekaar in en vorm 'n ketting Wroete van
'n halfmyl of langer! En die Wroet heel vooraan die
ketting (wie se haak natuurlik nie aan enigiets vasgehaak is nie) sleep

hulle in ’n wye kring al nader aan die Groot Glashyser.
“Haai!” skree oupa Joe. “Hulle gaan kom inhaak by hierdie vullis wat homself om ons vasgebind het!”
“En ons dan wegsleep!” roep Charlie uit.
“Na die planeet Wurmus toe,” snak ouma Josephine. “Agtienduisend vierhonderd sewe-en-twintig myl hier-vandaan!”
“Hulle kan dit nie wil doen nie!” skree meneer Wonka. “Om doen die sleepwerk hier rond!”
“Hulle gaan by hom inhaak, meneer Wonka!” sê Charlie. “Hulle gaan rêrig! Kan ons hulle nie keer nie? Hulle gaan ons wegsleep en hulle gaan die mense wat ons wegsleep saam met ons wegsleep!”
“Doen iets aan hierdie gekkerny!” krys ouma Georgina. “Moenie net daar rondsweef en vir hulle kyk nie!”
“Ek moet erken,” sê meneer Wonka, “ek weet vir die
eerste keer in my lewe nie wat om te doen nie.”
Hulle almal staar in afgryse deur die glas na die lang ketting WurmWroete. Die ketting se leier kom nader en nader. Die haak met die groot, kwaai oë is uitgestrek en gereed. Nog dertig sekondes, dan gaan hy inhaak by die Wroet wat homself om die hyser vasgebind het.
“Ek wil huis toe gaan!” weeklaag ouma Josephine. “Hoekom kan ons nie net almal huis toe gaan nie?”
“Dawerende doedelsakke!” skree meneer Wonka.
“Huis toe gaan! Goeie idee! Waar op aarde was my gedagtes! Komaan, Charlie! Gou! Ons moet die Aarde se atmosfeer weer binnedring! Vat jy die geel knoppie! Druk hom vir al wat jy werd is! Ek sal hierdie spulletjie hanteer! Charlie en meneer Wonka vlieg letterlik tot by die knoppies. “Hou vas julle hoedens!” skree meneer Wonka. “Gryp wat julle te grype het! Ons gaan af ondertoe!”
Vuurpyle begin aan alle kante van die Glashyser ontbrand. Hy draai skuins, steier en slinger tot naarwordens toe en stort die Aarde se atmosfeer dan teen ’n absoluut verbysterende spoed binne. “Truvuurpyle!” bulder meneer Wonka. “Ek moenie vergeet om die truvuurpyle af te skiet nie!” Hy vlieg oor na ’n ander reeks knoppies en begin op hulle speel soos op ’n klavier.
Die hyser skiet kop eerste en onderstebo ondertoe en die passasiers kom agter hulle sweef nou ook onderstebo. “Help!” gil ouma Georgina. “Al die bloed gaan na my kop toe!”
“Nou draai dan net om,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis maklik genoeg, of hoe?”
Almal hyg en blaas en slaan bollemakiesie in die lug
totdat hulle almal uiteindelik weer regop is. “Hoe hou die sleeptou, Oupa?” roep meneer Wonka uit.
“Hulle is nog met ons, meneer Wonka! Die tou hou nog goed!”
Dis ’n verstommende gesig - die Glashyser pyl af Aarde toe met die

yslike Vervoerkapsule op sleeptou agter hom aan. Maar die lang ketting Wroete kom ook saam en volg hulle ondertoe. Hulle hou maklik by en die voorste Wroet in die ketting se haak reik nou uit en gryp na die haak wat die Wroet om die hyser gevorm het!
"Ons is te laat!" skree ouma Georgina. "Hulle gaan by ons inhaak en ons terugtrek!"
"Ek twyfel," sê meneer Wonka. "Onthou julle nie wat gebeur wanneer 'n Wroet die Aarde se atmosfeer teen
'n hoë spoed binnedring nie? Hy raak rooiwarm. Hy verskroei tot 'n lang vuurspoor. Hy word 'n verskietende Wroet. Hierdie vieslike goed gaan binnekort soos springmielies begin spring!"
Soos wat hulle ondertoe voortsnel, begin die vonke van die hyser se kante af spat. Die glas gloei pienk, dan rooi, dan vuurrooi. Vonke begin ook van die lang ketting Wroete af spat en die Wroet voor in die ketting begin soos 'n rooiwarm vuuryster gloei. Al die ander ook. En ook die groot, glibberige een wat homself om die hyser vasgeknoop het. Hy probeer in werklikheid naarstiglik loskom sodat hy kan ontsnap, maar die knoop is te styf en binne nog tien sekondes begin hy sissend braai.
1 iulle kan hom tot binne-in die hyser hoor sis en spat.
Hy maak 'n geluid soos spek wat braai. En presies dieselfde gebeur met die duisend ander Wroete in die ketting. Die geweldige hitte verskroei hulle eenvoudig heeltemal. Hulle is rooiwarm, elke enkele een van hulle. Dan word hulle skielik witwarm en verander in 'n verblindende wit ligstraal.
"Hulle's verskietende Wroete!" skree Charlie.
"Wat 'n voortreflike gesig," sê meneer Wonka. "Dis beter as vuurwerke."
'n Paar sekondes later het al die Wroete in 'n aswolk weggewaai en dis alles verby. "Ons het dit reggekry!" roep meneer Wonka uit. "Hulle's gaar gebraai! So gaar soos garras, so raar soos rarras! Ons basse is gered!"
"Wat bedoel jy gered?" sê ouma Josephine. "Ons
gaan self ook gebraai word as dit veel langer so aanhou! Gebraai soos braaivleis! Kyk na daai glas! Dis warmer as
'n braaipan!"
"Moenie vrees nie, geagte dame," antwoord meneer Wonka. "My hyser is lugverkoel, geventileer, belug en geoutomatiseer op elke denkbare manier. Ons sal niks oorkom nie."
"Ek het nie die vaagste benul wat aangaan nie," maak mevrou Bucket een van haar seldsame opmerkings. "Maar wat dit ook al is, ek hou nie daarvan nie."
"Is dit nie vir Mamma lekker nie?" vra Charlie.
"Nee," sê sy. "Nie vir my nie, en ook nie vir jou pa

me*
“Wat ’n wonderlike gesig!” sê meneer Wonka. “Kyk net die Aarde daar onder, Charlie. Kyk hoe word dit groter en groter!”
“En ons pyl teen tweeduisend myl ’n uur daarop af!”
kreun ouma Georgina. “Hoe de ongeluk gaan ons spoed
verminder? Julle het nie daaraan gedink nie, het julle?” “Hy’t valskerms,” sê Charlie vir haar. “Ek wed Ouma
hy’t yslike groot valskerms wat sal oopgaan net voor ons die grond tref.”
“Valskerms!” sê meneer Wonka verontwaardig. “Valskerms is net vir ruimtevaarders en sissies! En in elk geval, ons wil nie spoed verminder nie. Ons wil spoed optel. Ek het julle mos al gesê ons moet teen ’n absoluut geweldige spoed vlieg wanneer ons dit tref. Anders gaan ons nooit ’n gat in die Sjokoladefabriek se dak maak me.
“Wat van die Vervoerkapsule?” vra Charlie benoud.
“Ons sal hulle oor ’n paar sekondes loslaat,” antwoord meneer Wonka. “Hulle het valskerms, nogal drie, om hulle spoed teen die einde te breek.”
“Hoe weet ons ons gaan nie in die Stille Oseaan
neerstort nie?” vra ouma Josephine.
“Ek weet nie,” sê meneer Wonka. “Maar ons kan almal swem, of hoe?”
“Hierdie man,” skree ouma Josephine, “is so kens soos
’n kraai.”
“Hy’s so koekoes soos ’n koekoek!” gil ouma
Georgina.
Laer en laer stort die Groot Glashyser. Nader en nader kom die Aarde daar onder. Oseane en kontinente jaag hulle tegemoet, doem al groter en groter voor hulle op …
“Oupa Joe! Gooi uit die tou! Maak hom los!” beveel meneer Wonka. “Hulle sal nou op hul eie regkom, solank hul valskerms werk.”
“Tou los!” kondig oupa Joe aan en die reusagtige
Vervoerkapsule, wat nou op sy eie is, swenk na die een
kant toe weg. Charlie waai vir die drie ruimtevaarders in die voorste venster. Nie een van hulle waai terug nie. Hulle sit nog steeds daar in skok en verbystering en staar na die ou dames en die ou here en die seun wat in die Glashyser rondsweef.
“Dis nou nie meer lank nie,” sê meneer Wonka en reik uit na ’n ry ligblou knoppies in die een hoek. “Ons sal binnekort weet of ons lewendig of dood hier gaan uitkom. Bly asseblief hierdie laaste entjie tjoepstil. Ek moet verskriklik hard konsentreer, anders gaan ons op die verkeerde plek beland.”
Hulle duik deur ’n dik wolkbank en vir tien sekondes kan hulle niks sien nie. Wanneer hulle deur die wolke breek, het die Vervoerkapsule verdwyn en die Aarde is baie naby en onder hulle is daar berge en

woude … dan velde en bome … dan ’n klein dorpie.
“Daar is dit!” roep meneer Wonka uit. “My
Sjokoladefabriek! My geliefde Sjokoladefabriek!”
“U bedoel Charlie se Sjokoladefabriek,” sê oupa Joe. “Dis reg!” sê meneer Wonka en draai na Charlie. “Ek
het skoon vergeet! Vergewe my, my liewe seun. Natuurlik
is dit joune! En hier gaan ons!”
Deur die hyser se glasvloer sien Charlie die reusagtige fabriek se yslike rooi dak en hoë skoorstene. Hulle pyl nou regu it daarop af.
“Hou asem op!” skree meneer Wonka. “Druk julle neuse en oë toe! Maak julle sitplekgordels vas en sê julle gebedjies op! Ons gaan deur die dak duik!”

Back to the Chocolate Factory

And then the noise of splintering wood and broken glass and absolute darkness and the most awful crunching sounds as the Elevator rushed on and on, smashing everything before it.

All at once, the crashing noises stopped and the ride became smoother and the Elevator seemed to be travelling on guides or rails, twisting and turning like a roller-coaster. And when the lights came on, Charlie suddenly realized that for the last few seconds he hadn’t been floating at all. He had been standing normally on the floor. Mr Wonka was on the floor, too, and so was Grandpa Joe and Mr and Mrs Bucket and also the big bed. As for Grandma Josephine, Grandma Georgina and Grandpa George, they must have fallen right back on to the bed because they were now all three on top of it and scrabbling to get under the blanket.

‘We’re through!’ yelled Mr Wonka. ‘We’ve done it! We’re in!’ Grandpa Joe grabbed him by the hand and said, ‘Well done, sir! How splendid! What a magnificent job!’

‘Where in the world are we now?’ said Mrs Bucket.

‘We’re back, Mother!’ Charlie cried. ‘We’re in the Chocolate Factory!’

‘I’m very glad to hear it,’ said Mrs Bucket. ‘But didn’t we come rather a long way round?’

‘We had to,’ said Mr Wonka, ‘to avoid the traffic.’

‘I have never met a man,’ said Grandma Georgina, ‘who talks so much

absolute nonsense!'

'A little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men,' Mr Wonka said.

'Why don't you pay some attention to where this crazy Elevator's going!' shouted Grandma Josephine. 'And stop footling about!'

'A little footling round about, will stop you going up the spout,' said Mr Wonka.

'What did I tell you!' cried Grandma Georgina. 'He's round the twist! He's bogged as a beetle! He's dotty as a dingbat! He's got rats in the roof! I want to go home!'

'Too late,' said Mr Wonka. 'We're there!' The Elevator stopped. The doors opened and Charlie found himself looking out once again at the great Chocolate Room with the chocolate river and the chocolate waterfall, where everything was eatable — the trees, the leaves, the grass, the pebbles and even the rocks. And there to meet them were hundreds and hundreds of tiny Oompa-Loompas, all waving and cheering. It was a sight that took one's breath away. Even Grandma Georgina was stunned into silence for a few seconds. But not for long. 'Who in the world are all those peculiar little men?' she said.

'They're Oompa-Loompas,' Charlie told her. 'They're wonderful. You'll love them.'

'Ssshh!' said Grandpa Joe. 'Listen, Charlie! The drums are starting up! They're going to sing.'

'Alleluia!' sang the Oompa-Loompas.

'Oh alleluia and hooray!

Our Willy Wonka's back today!

We thought you'd never make it home!

We thought you'd left us all alone!

We knew that you would have to face

Some frightful creatures up in space.

We even thought we heard the crunch

Of someone eating you for lunch …’

‘All right!’ shouted Mr Wonka, laughing and raising both hands. ‘Thank you for your welcome! Will some of you please help to get this bed out of here!’

Fifty Oompa-Loompas ran forward and pushed the bed with the three old ones in it out of the Elevator. Mr and Mrs Bucket, both looking completely overwhelmed by it all, followed the bed out. Then came Grandpa Joe, Charlie and Mr Wonka.

‘Now,’ said Mr Wonka, addressing Grandpa George, Grandma Georgina and Grandma Josephine. ‘Up you hop out of that bed and let’s get cracking. I’m sure you’ll all want to lend a hand running the factory.’

‘Who, us?’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘Yes, you,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘You must be joking,’ said Grandma Georgina.

‘I never joke,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘Now just you listen to me, sir!’ said old Grandpa George, sitting up straight in bed. ‘You’ve got us into quite enough tubbles and trumbles for one day!’

‘I’ve got you out of them, too,’ said Mr Wonka proudly. ‘And I’m going to get you out of that bed as well, you see if I don’t!’

Terug in die Sjokoladefabriek

KADWAR! Daar is die geluid van hout wat versplinter en glas wat breek en absolute donkerte en die afgryslikste kraakgeluide soos wat die hyser verder en verder neerstort en alles voor die voet verpletter.
Skielik hou die breekgeluide op en hulle beweeg egaliger asof die hyser op spore loop en soos ’n tuimeltrein draai en swaai. En wanneer die ligte aangaan, besef Charlie skielik dat hy die laaste paar sekondes glad nie gesweef het nie. Hy het gewoonweg op die vloer gestaan. Meneer Wonka staan ook op die vloer, en so ook oupa Joe en meneer

en mevrou Bucket en die groot bed. Ouma Josephine, ouma Georgina en oupa George moes terug op die bed geval het, want hulle sit nou al drie daarop en skarrel om onder ciie beddegoed in te kom.
“Ons is deur die dak!” gil meneer Wonka. “Ons het dit
reggekry! Ons is in!” Oupa Joe gryp hom aan die hand en sê: “Knap gedaan, meneer! Manjifiek! ’n Voortreflike stukkie werk!”
“Waar in die wêreld is ons nou?” vra mevrou Bucket. “Ons is terug, Mamma!” roep Charlie uit. “Ons is in
die Sjokoladefabriek!”
“Ek is baie bly om dit te hoor,” sê mevrou Bucket. “Maar het ons nie met ’n taamlike ompad langs gekom nie?”
“Ons moes,” sê meneer Wonka. “Om die verkeer te mis*
“Ek het nog nooit ’n man ontmoet,” sê ouma Georgina, “wat so baie bog praat nie!”
“’n Bietjie bog nou en dan behaag ’n wyse man,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Hoekom bepaal jy nie eerder jou aandag by waarheen hierdie simpel hyser gaan nie!” skel ouma Josephine. “En hou op ginnegaap!”
“’n Bietjie ginnegaap vermaak menige aap en swaap,”
sê meneer Wonka.
“Wat het ek julle gesê!” skree ouma Georgina. “Hy’t ’n hele paar skroewe en spykers los! Hy’s so dol soos dolos! Hy’s so gek soos geitjie! Hy’t rotte in sy dak! Ek wil huis toe gaan!”
“Te laat,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ons is hier!” Die hyser kom tot stilstand. Die deure gaan oop en Charlie kyk weer uit oor die groot Sjokoladesaal met die sjokoladerivier en die sjokoladewaterval waar alles eetbaar is - die bome, die blare, die gras, die klippe en selfs die rotse. En daar staan honderde en honderde klein Oempa-Loempas wat almal waai en juig om hulle te verwelkom. Dit ’n gesig wat enigiemand na sy asem sal laat snak. Selfs ouma Georgina is ’n paar sekondes lank stil van verstomming. Maar nie vir té lank nie. “Wie de ongeluk is daardie koddige klein skepseltjies?”
vra sy.
“Hulle’s Oempa-Loempas,” sê Charlie vir haar. “Hulle’s wonderlik. Ouma gaan baie van hulle hou.”
“Sjuut!” sê oupa Joe. “Luister, Charlie! Die tromme
begin speel! Hulle gaan sing.”

“Hoera, hoera!” sing die Oempa-Loempas. “Om Willy Wonka is uiteindelik weer tuis Veilig terug by ons in sy sjokoladehuis!
Ons wag al só lank dat hy moet terugkom, Want ons is heeltemal verlore sonder hom! Ons het geweet hy moes teen ’n monster veg Daar bo in die buitenste ruim, verier iveg! Dankie tog hy het hom toe uitoorlê!
Dis heerlik om hom weer terug te hê!

“Genoeg!” roep meneer Wonka en lag en lig albei sy hande op. “Dankie vir julle verwelkoming! Kan party van julle asseblief kom help om hierdie bed hier uit te kry?”
Vyftig Oempa-Loempas hardloop vorentoe en stoot die bed met die oumense daarin by die hyser uit.
Meneer en mevrou Bucket lyk albei totaal oorweldig deur alles, maar volg die bed buitentoe. Dan kom oupa Joe, Charlie en meneer Wonka.
“Nou toe,” sê meneer Wonka en kyk na oupa George,
ouma Georgina en ouma Josephine. “Spring uit die bed en spring aan die werk. Ek is seker julle wil almal hand bysit met die fabriek se bestuur.”
“Wie, ons?” vra ouma Josephine.
“Ja, julle,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Jy maak seker ’n grap,” sê ouma Georgina.
“Ek maak nooit grappe nie,” sê meneer Wonka. “Luister jy nou vir my, meneer!” sê oupa George en sit
regop in die bed. “Jy het ons al in genoeg moeilikheid en verfoeilikheid vir een dag laat beland!”
“Ek het julle ook daaruit gekry,” sê meneer Wonka
trots. “En ek gaan julle nog uit daai bed ook kry, julle sal sien!”

How Wonka-Vite Was Invented

‘I haven’t been out of this bed in twenty years and I’m not getting out now for anybody!’ said Grandma Josephine firmly.

‘Nor me,’ said Grandma Georgina.

‘You were out of it just now, every one of you,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘That was floating,’ said Grandpa George. ‘We couldn’t help it.’

‘We never put our feet on the floor,’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘Try it,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘You might surprise yourself.’

‘Go on, Josie,’ said Grandpa Joe. ‘Give it a try. I did. It was easy.’

‘We’re perfectly comfortable where we are, thank you very much,’ said Grandma Josephine.

Mr Wonka sighed and shook his head very slowly and very sadly. ‘Oh well,’ he said, ‘so that’s that.’ He laid his head on one side and gazed

thoughtfully at the three old people in the bed, and Charlie, watching him closely, saw those bright little eyes of his beginning to spark and twinkle once again.

Ha-ha, thought Charlie. What's coming now?

'I suppose,' said Mr Wonka, placing the tip of one finger on the point of his nose and pressing gently, 'I suppose … because this is a very special case … I suppose I could spare you just a tiny little bit of …' He stopped and shook his head.

'A tiny little bit of what?' said Grandma Josephine sharply.

'No,' said Mr Wonka. 'It's pointless. You seem to have decided to stay in that bed whatever happens. And anyway, the stuff is much too precious to waste. I'm sorry I mentioned it.' He started to walk away.

'Hey!' shouted Grandma Georgina. 'You can't begin something and not go on with it! What is too precious to waste?'

Mr Wonka stopped. Slowly he turned around. He looked long and hard at the three old people in the bed. They looked back at him, waiting. He kept silent a little longer, allowing their curiosity to grow. The Oompa-Loompas stood absolutely still behind him, watching.

'What is this thing you're talking about?' said Grandma Georgina.

'Get on with it, for heaven's sake!' said Grandma Josephine.

'Very well,' Mr Wonka said at last. 'I'll tell you. And listen carefully because this could change your whole lives. It could even change you.'

'I don't want to be changed!' shouted Grandma Georgina.

'May I go on, madam? Thank you. Not long ago, I was fooling about in my Inventing Room, stirring stuff around and mixing things up the way I do every afternoon at four o'clock, when suddenly I found I had made something that seemed very unusual. This thing I had made kept changing colour as I looked at it, and now and again it gave a little jump, it actually jumped up in the air, as though it were alive. "What have we here?" I cried, and I rushed it quickly to the Testing Room and gave some to the Oompa-Loompa who was on duty there at the time. The result was immediate! It was flabbergasting! It was unbelievable! It was also rather unfortunate.'

‘What happened?’ said Grandma Georgina, sitting up.

‘What indeed,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘Answer her question,’ said Grandma Josephine. ‘What happened to the Oompa-Loompa?’

‘Ah,’ said Mr Wonka, ‘yes … well … there’s no point in crying over spilled milk, is there? I realized, you see, that I had stumbled upon a new and tremendously powerful vitamin, and I also knew that if only I could make it safe, if only I could stop it doing to others what it did to that Oompa-Loompa …’

‘What did it do to that Oompa-Loompa?’ said Grandma Georgina sternly.

‘The older I get, the deafer I become,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘Do please raise your voice a trifle next time. Thank you so much. Now then. I simply had to find a way of making this stuff safe, so that people could take it without … er …’

‘Without what?’ snapped Grandma Georgina.

‘Without a leg to stand on,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘So I rolled up my sleeves and set to work once more in the Inventing Room. I mixed and I mixed. I must have tried just about every mixture under the moon. By the way, there is a little hole in one wall of the Inventing Room which connects directly with the Testing Room next door, so I was able all the time to keep passing stuff through for testing to whichever brave volunteer happened to be on duty. Well, the first few weeks were pretty depressing and we won’t talk about them. Let me tell you instead what happened on the one hundred and thirty-second day of my labours. That morning, I had changed the mixture drastically, and this time the little pill I produced at the end of it all was not nearly so active or alive as the others had been. It kept changing colour, yes, but only from lemon-yellow to blue, then back to yellow again. And when I placed it on the palm of my hand, it didn’t jump about like a grasshopper. It only quivered, and then ever so slightly.

‘I ran to the hole in the wall that led to the Testing Room. A very old Oompa-Loompa was on duty there that morning. He was a bald, wrinkled, toothless old fellow. He was in a wheel-chair. He had been in the wheel-chair for at least fifteen years.

'"This is test number one hundred and thirty-two!" I said, chalking it up on the board.

'I handed him the pill. He looked at it nervously. I couldn't blame him for being a bit jittery after what had happened to the other one hundred and thirty-one volunteers.'

'What had happened to them?' shouted Grandma Georgina. 'Why don't you answer the question instead of skidding around it on two wheels?'

'Who knows the way out of a rose?' said Mr Wonka. 'So this brave old Oompa-Loompa took the pill and, with the help of a little water, he gulped it down. And then, suddenly, the most amazing thing happened. Before my very eyes, queer little changes began taking place in the way he looked. A moment earlier, he had been practically bald, with just a fringe of snowy white hair around the sides and the back of his head. But now the fringe of white hair was turning gold and all over the top of his head new gold hair was beginning to sprout, like grass. In less than half a minute, he had grown a splendid new crop of long golden hair. At the same time, many of the wrinkles started disappearing from his face, not all of them, but about half, enough to make him look a good deal younger, and all of this must have given him a nice tickly feeling because he started grinning at me, then laughing, and as soon as he opened his mouth, I saw the strangest sight of all. Teeth were growing up out from those old toothless gums, good white teeth, and they were coming up so fast I could actually see them getting bigger and bigger.

'I was too flabbergasted to speak. I just stood there with my head poking through the hole in the wall, staring at the little Oompa-Loompa. I saw him slowly lifting himself out of his wheel-chair. He tested his legs on the ground. He stood up. He walked a few paces. Then he looked up at me and his face was bright. His eyes were huge and bright as two stars.

'"Look at me," he said softly. "I'm walking! It's a miracle!"

'"It's Wonka-Vite!" I said. "The great rejuvenator. It makes you young again. How old do you feel now?"

'He thought carefully about this question, then he said, "I feel almost exactly how I felt when I was fifty years old."

'"How old were you just now, before you took the Wonka-Vite?" I asked him.

'"Seventy last birthday," he answered.

'"That means," I said, "it has made you twenty years younger."

'"It has, it has!" he cried, delighted. "I feel as frisky as a froghopper!"

'"Not frisky enough," I told him. "Fifty is still pretty old. Let us see if I can't help you a bit more. Stay right where you are. I'll be back in a twink."

'I ran to my work-bench and began to make one more pill of Wonka-Vite, using exactly the same mixture as before.

'"Swallow this," I said, passing the second pill through the hatch. There was no hesitating this time. Eagerly, he popped it into his mouth and chased it down with a drink of water. And behold, within half a minute, another twenty years had fallen away from his face and body and he was now a slim and sprightly young Oompa-Loompa of thirty. He gave a whoop of joy and started dancing around the room, leaping high in the air and coming down on his toes. "Are you happy?" I asked him.

'"I'm ecstatic!" he cried, jumping up and down. "I'm happy as a horse in a hay-field!" He ran out of the Testing Room to show himself off to his family and friends.

'Thus was Wonka-Vite invented!' said Mr Wonka. 'And thus was it made safe for all to use!'

'Why don't you use it yourself, then?' said Grandma Georgina. 'You told Charlie you were getting too old to run the factory, so why don't you just take a couple of pills and get forty years younger? Tell me that?'

'Anyone can ask questions,' said Mr Wonka. 'It's the answers that count. Now then, if the three of you in the bed would care to try a dose …'

'Just one minute!' said Grandma Josephine, sitting up straight. 'First I'd like to take a look at this seventy-year-old Oompa-Loompa who is

now back to thirty!’

Mr Wonka flicked his fingers. A tiny Oompa-Loompa, looking young and perky, ran forward out of the crowd and did a marvellous little dance in front of the three old people in the big bed. ‘Two weeks ago, he was seventy years old and in a wheel-chair!’ Mr Wonka said proudly. ‘And look at him now!’

‘The drums, Charlie!’ said Grandpa Joe. ‘Listen! They’re starting up again!’

Far away down on the bank of the chocolate river, Charlie could see the Oompa-Loompa band striking up once more. There were twenty Oompa-Loompas in the band, each with an enormous drum twice as tall as himself, and they were beating a slow mysterious rhythm that soon had all the other hundreds of Oompa-Loompas swinging and swaying from side to side in a kind of trance. They then began to chant:

‘If you are old and have the shakes,

If all your bones are full of aches,

If you can hardly walk at all,

If living drives you up the wall,

If you’re a grump and full of spite,

If you’re a human parasite,

THEN WHAT YOU NEED IS WONKA-VITE!

Your eyes will shine, your hair will grow,

Your face and skin will start to glow,

Your rotten teeth will all drop out

And in their place new teeth will sprout.

Those rolls of fat around your hips

Will vanish, and your wrinkled lips

Will get so soft and rosy-pink

That all the boys will smile and wink

And whisper secretly that this

Is just the girl they want to kiss!

But wait! For that is not the most

Important thing of which to boast.

Good looks you'll have, we've told you so,

But looks aren't everything, you know.

Each pill, as well, to you will give

AN EXTRA TWENTY YEARS TO LIVE!

So come, old friends, and do what's right!

Let's make your lives as bright as bright!

Let's take a dose of this delight!

This heavenly magic dynamite!

You can't go wrong, you must go right!

IT'S WILLY WONKA'S WONKA-VITE!'

Hoe Wonka-Jonka uitgevind is

"Ek het twintig jaar laas uit hierdie bed opgestaan en ek gaan nie nou opstaan nie, vir niks of niemand nie!" sê ouma Josephine beslis.
"Ek ook nie," sê ouma Georgina.
"Julle was netnou op, al drie van julle," sê meneer
Wonka.
"Omdat ons gesweef het," sê oupa George. "Ons kon dit nie verhelp nie."
"Ons het ons voete nie een keer op die vloer gesit nie,"
sê ouma Josephine.

“Probeer dit doen,” sê meneer Wonka. “Julle sal dalk aangenaam verras wees.
“Komaan, Josie,” sê oupa Joe. “Probeer. Ekhet. Dit was maklik.”
“Ons is heeltemal gemaklik waar ons is, baie dankie,”
sê ouma Josephine.
Meneer Wonka sug en skud sy kop baie stadig en baie hartseer. “O wel,” sê hy, “dan is dit tot daarna toe.” Hy draai sy kop skuins en kyk diep ingedagte na die drie oumense in die bed. Charlie hou hom fyn dop en sien hoe sy blink klein ogies skielik begin skitter en glinster.
Ha-ha, dink Charlie. Wat nou?
“Ek veronderstel,” sê meneer Wonka en sit die punt van sy een vinger op die punt van sy neus en druk saggies daarop. “Ek veronderstel … aangesien dit so ’n spesiale geval is … Ek veronderstel ek kan seker vir julle ’n klein bietjie gee …” Hy bly stil en skud sy kop.

“’n Klein bietjie wat gee?” vra ouma Josephine skerp. “Nee,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis sinneloos. Julle het
duidelik besluit om in die bed te bly al gebeur wat ook al. En buitendien, daardie goed is gans te kosbaar om te mors. Ek is jammer ek het dit genoem.” Hy begin wegloop.
“Haai!” roep ouma Georgina. “Jy kan nie iets begin en
dan nie klaarmaak nie! Wat is te kosbaar om te mors?” Meneer Wonka gaan staan. Hy draai stadig om. Hy
kyk lank en ingedagte na die drie oumense in die bed.
Hulle kyk vir hom en wag. Hy bly nog ’n bietjie langer stil sodat hulle nog ’n bietjie nuuskieriger moet word. Die Oempa-Loempas staan tjoepstil agter hom en hou alles dop.
“Waarvan het jy gepraat?” vra ouma Georgina.
“Uit daarmee, om hemelswil!” sê ouma Josephine. “Nou goed,” sê meneer Wonka dan uiteindelik. “Ek
sal julle vertel. En luister mooi, want dit kan julle lewens heeltemal verander. Dit kan selfs julle verander!”
“Ek wil nie verander word nie!” skree ouma Georgina. “Mag ek aangaan, mevrou? Dankie. Nie lank gelede nie
het ek in my Uitvindingsaal rondgevroetel en allerhande
goed geroer en gemeng soos wat ek elke middag vieruur doen, en toe skielik agtergekom ek het iets baie buitengewoon beet. Die mengsel wat ek gemaak het, het aanhoudend van kleur verander terwyl ek daarna kyk, en nou en dan het dit ’n effense sprongetjie gegee, dit het letterlik in die lug opgespring asof dit lewendig is. ‘Wat het ons hierT het ek uitgeroep en dit haastig na die Toetskamer toe gevat en daarvan vir die Oempa-Loempa aan diens gegee. Die resultaat was oombliklik! Dit was verbluffend! Dit was ongelooflik! Dit was ook ietwat rampspoedig.”

“Wat het gebeur?” vra ouma Georgina en sit regop,
“Dit kan u weer vra,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Antwoord haar vraag,” sê ouma Josephine. “Wat het met die Oempa-Loempa gebeur?”
“A,” sê meneer Wonka, “ja … wel … gedane sake het geen keer nie, het dit? Julle sien, ek het besef ek het toevallig ’n nuwe en geweldige sterk vitamien ontdek en ek het geweet as ek dit veilig kon maak, as ek kon keer dat dit aan ander doen wat dit aan die Oempa-Loempa gedoen het…”
“Wat het dit aan daardie Oempa-Loempa gedoen?” vra ouma Georgina streng.
“Hoe ouer ek word, hoe dower raak ek,” sê meneer Wonka. “Praat volgende keer asseblief ’n klein bietjie harder. Baie dankie. Nou ja. Ek moes eenvoudig net ’n manier kry om die mengsel veilig te maak, sodat mense dit kon drink sonder … eh …”
“Sonder wat?” vra ouma Georgina ongeduldig.
“Sonder ’n been om op te staan,” sê meneer Wonka. “So toe rol ek my moue op en spring weet aan die werk in die Uitvindingsaal. Ek het gemeng en gemeng. Ek moes omtrent elke iedere mengsel onder die son uitgetoets het. Terloops, daar is ’n luik in die Uitvindingsaal se een muur wat direk na die Toetskamer langsaan lei, so ek kon die hele tyd goed daardeur aangee sodat watter dapper vrywilliger ook al aan diens was, dit op die proef kon stel. Wei, die eerste paar weke was taamlik ontmoedigend, so ek sal nie daaroor praat nie. Laat ek julle eerder vertel wat op die eenhonderd twee-en-dertigste dag van my harde werk gebeur het. Daardie oggend het ek die mengsel drasties verander en dié keer was die pilletjie waarmee ek uiteindelik vorendag gekom het nie naastenby so aktief of lewendig soos die voriges nie. Dit het aanhoudend van kleur verander, ja, maar net van lemmetjicgroen na blou, en dan weer na geel. En wanneer ek dit op my handpalm gesit het, het dit nie soos ’n sprinkaan afgespring nie. Dit het net gebewe, net baie effentjies.
“Ek hardloop toe na die luik in die muur wat na die
Toetskamer lei. ’n Baie ou Oempa-Loempa was daardie oggend aan diens. Hy was bles, vol plooie en tandloos. Hy het in ’n rolstoel gesit. Hy was al vir minstens vyftien jaar aan die rolstoel vasgekluister.

“‘Dit is toets nommer eenhonderd rwcc’cn-dcrtig!’ sê ek en skryf dit op die bord neer.
“Toe gee ek vir hom die pil. Hy kyk senuweeagtig daarna. Ek kon hom nie blameer dat hy ietwat senuweeagtig was ná wat met die ander eenhonderd een-en-dertig vrywilligers gebeur het nie.”
“Wat het met hulle gebeur?” gil ouma Georgina. “Hoekom antwoord jy nie die vraag pleks van op twee wiele óm en óm dit rond te jaag

nie?”
“Anderman se weë is duister,” sê meneer Wonka. “Nietemin, daardie dapper OempaToempa vat die pil toe en sluk dit met ’n bietjie water af. En skielik gebeur
daar die ongelooflikste ding. Voor my eie twee oë begin vreemde dinge verander aan hoe hy lyk. ’n Oomblik gelede was hy nog so te sê bles, met net ’n strokie sneeuwit hare langs die slape en op sy agterkop. Maar toe word die strokie wit hare goud en nuwe hare begin soos gras op sy kop groei. Binne minder as ’n halfminuut het hy ’n welige bos lang goue hare. Terselfdertyd begin baie van die plooie op sy gesig verdwyn, nie almal nie, maar omtrent die helfte, genoeg om hom baie jonger te laat lyk, en dit alles moes vir hom ’n lekker tintelende gevoel gegee het, want hy begin vir my grinnik en toe begin hy lag en toe hy sy mond oopmaak, sien ek die vreemdste ding van alles. Daar groei tande uit sy ou tandlose tandvleise; sterk, wit tande wat so vinnig groei dat ek letterlik kan sien hoe hulle groter en groter word.
“Ek was te oorstelp om te praat. Ek het net daar gestaan met my kop deur die luik in die muur gedruk en die klein Oempa-Loempa aangestaar. Toe sien ek hoe hy hom stadig uit sy rolstoel oplig. Hy sit sy bene versigtig op die grond. Hy staan op. Hy loop ’n paar tree. Toe kyk hy op na my en sy gesig verhelder. Sy oë is groot en so blink soos twee sterre.
“‘Kyk na my,’ sê hy sag. ‘Ek loop! Dis ’n wonderwerk!’ “‘Dis Wonka-Jonka!’ sê ek. ‘Die groot verjongingskuur.
Dit maak jou weer jonk. Hoe oud voel jy nou?’
“Hy dink ’n oomblik oor die vraag na en toe sê hy: ‘Ek voel amper presies soos ek gevoel het toe ek vyftig jaar oud was.’
“‘Hoe oud was jy netnou, voor jy die Wonka-Jonka gedrink het?’ vra ek.
“‘Sewentig laas verjaardag,’ antwoord hy.
“‘Dit beteken,’ sê ek, ‘dit het jou twintig jaar jonger gemaak.’
“‘Ja, dit het, dit het!’ roep hy verheug uit. ‘Ek voel so lewendig soos ’n leeuwelpie!’
“‘Nie lewendig genoeg nie,’ sê ek vir hom. ‘Vyftig is nog steeds taamlik oud. Kom ons kyk of ek jou nie ’n bietjie meer kan help nie. Bly net daar. Ek is binne ’n oogwenk terug.’
“Ek is haastig terug na my werkstafel en begin toe nóg
’n Wonka-Jonka-pil maak met presies dieselfde mengsel as voorheen.
“‘Sluk dit,’ sê ek toe en gee vir hom die tweede pil deur die luik aan. Hierdie keer huiwer hy glad nie. Hy stop dit gretig in sy mond en sluk dit haastig met water af. En sowaar, binne ’n halfminuut verdwyn daar nóg twintig jaar van sy gesig en liggaam en hy is nou ’n skraal en sprankelende jong Oempa-Loempa van dertig. Hy trippel rond van

vreugde en begin deur die vertrek dans, spring hoog in die lug op en land op sy tone. ‘Is jy gelukkig?’ vra ek vir hom.
“‘Ek is ekstaties!’ roep hy uit en spring op en af. ‘Ek is so
gelukkig soos ’n gans in ganshemel!’ Daarmee hardloop hy by die Toetskamer uit om vir sy familie en vriende te gaan wys wat met hom gebeur het.
“Dis hoe Wonka-Jonka uitgevind is!” sê meneer Wonka.
“En hoe dit veilig gemaak is vir almal se gebruik!” “Hoekom gebruik jy dit dan nie self nie?” vra ouma
Georgina. “Jy’t vir Charlie gesê jy raak te oud om die fabriek te bestuur, so hoekom drink jy nie ’n paar pille en word veertig jaar jonger nie? Sê my dit?”
“Enigiemand kan vrae vra,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis die antwoorde wat tel. Nou ja, as julle drie daar in die bed dalk belangstel om daarvan te drink …”
“Net ’n oomblik!” sê ouma Josephine en sit regop.
“Ek wil eers sien hoe lyk daardie sewentigjarige Oempa-Loempa wat nou weer dertig is!”
Meneer Wonka klap sy vingers. ’n Piepklein Oempa’
Loempa wat jonk en op en wakker lyk, hardloop tussen die ander deur vorentoe en haal ’n paar sierlike danspassies voor die drie oumense in die groot bed uit. “Twee weke gelede was hy sewentig jaar oud en in ’n rolstoel!’ sê meneer Wonka trots. “En kyk hoe lyk hy nou!”
“Die tromme, Charlie!” sê oupa Joe. “Luister! Hulle begin weer speel!” Ver onder op die sjokoladerivier se oewer sien Charlie hoe die Oempa-Loempas se orkes weer begin speel. Daar is twintig Oempa-Loempas in die orkes, elkeen met ’n enorme trom twee keer so groot soos hy self, en hulle

slaan ’n stadige, geheimsinnige ritme. Dis nie lank nie of die honderde ander Oempa-Loempas wieg almal heen en weer in ’n soort beswyming. Dan begin hulle dreunsing:
“Is jy oud en vol she te,
Is jou jeug lankal vergete? Is jy alewig aan die beive Is jy al moeg vir die lewe?
Is jy knorrig en vol verdriet,
Is jy ’n menslike parasiet!
DRINK DAN WONKAJONKA! Jou oé sal blink, jou hare sal groei, Jou gesig en jou vel sal weer gloei. Jou vrot tande sal almal verdwyn En sterk nuwes sal oral verskyn. Weg is die vetrolle om jou heupe, Weg is die plooie en slote en kepe. Jou wange is weer bloesend en rooi
En almal dink jy’s beeldskoon mooi.
Jou hele lewe het skielik weer kleur En jy het vriende te kus en te keur. Jy is weer bemind en gewild.

Jy voel gelukkig en vervuld.
Jy het ’n blakende uiterlike
En ’n ewe gesonde innerlike.
Elkeen van hierdie pilletjies verleng jou lewe,
LAAT JOU ’N HELE TWINTIG JAAR LANGER LEWE!
So kom, liewe vriende, hou op huiwer,
Word weer jonk en vars en suiwer! Drink van hierdie magiese dinamiet; Dis die einde van al julle verdriet! Gryp die kans wat die lewe julle bied!
DRINK WILLY WONKA SE WONKAJONKA!

Recipe for Wonka-Vite

‘Here it is!’ cried Mr Wonka, standing at the end of the bed and holding high in one hand a little bottle. ‘The most valuable bottle of pills in the world! And that, by the way,’ he said, giving Grandma Georgina a saucy glance, ‘is why I haven’t taken any myself. They are far too valuable to waste on me.’

He held the bottle out over the bed. The three old ones sat up and stretched their scrawny necks, trying to catch a glimpse of the pills inside. Charlie and Grandpa Joe also came forward to look. So did Mr and Mrs Bucket. The label said:

WONKA-VITE

Each pill will make you YOUNGER by exactly 20 years

CAUTION!

Do not take more than the amount recommended by

Mr. Wonka

They could all see the pills through the glass. They were brilliant yellow, shimmering and quivering inside the bottle. Vibrating is perhaps a better word. They were vibrating so rapidly that each pill became a blur and you couldn't see its shape. You could only see its colour. You got the impression that there was something very small but incredibly powerful, something not quite of this world, locked up inside them and fighting to get out.

'They're wriggling,' said Grandma Georgina. 'I don't like things that wriggle. How do we know they won't go on wriggling inside us after we've swallowed them? Like those Mexican jumping beans of Charlie's I swallowed a couple of years back. You remember that, Charlie?'

'I told you not to eat them, Grandma.'

'They went on jumping about inside me for a month,' said Grandma Georgina. 'I couldn't sit still!'

'If I'm going to eat one of those pills, I jolly well want to know what's in it first,' said Grandma Josephine.

'I don't blame you,' said Mr Wonka. 'But the recipe is extremely complicated. Wait a minute … I've got it written down somewhere …' He started digging around in the pockets of his coat-tails. 'I know it's here somewhere,' he said. 'I can't have lost it. I keep all my most valuable and important things in these pockets. The trouble is, there's such a lot of them …' He started emptying the pockets and placing the contents on the bed — a homemade catapult … a yo-yo … a trick fried-egg made of rubber … a slice of salami … a tooth with a filling in it … a stinkbomb … a packet of itching-powder … 'It must be here, it must be, it must,' he kept muttering. 'I put it away so carefully … Ah! Here it is!' He unfolded a crumpled piece of paper, smoothed it

out, held it up and began to read as follows:

RECIPE FOR MAKING WONKA-VITE

Take a block of finest chocolate weighing one ton (or twenty sackfuls of broken chocolate, whichever is the easier). Place chocolate in very large cauldron and melt over red-hot furnace. When melted, lower the heat slightly so as not to burn the chocolate, but keep it boiling. Now add the following, in precisely the order given, stirring well all the time and allowing each item to dissolve before adding the next:

THE HOOF OF A MANTICORE

THE TRUNK (AND THE SUITCASE) OF AN ELEPHANT

THE YOLKS OF THREE EGGS FROM A WHIFFLE-BIRD

A WART FROM A WART-HOG

THE HORN OF A COW (IT MUST BE A LOUD HORN)

THE FRONT TAIL OF A COCKATRICE

SIX OUNCES OF SPRUNGE FROM A YOUNG SLIMESCRAPER

TWO HAIRS (AND ONE RABBIT) FROM THE HEAD OF A HIPPOCAMPUS

THE BEAK OF A RED-BREASTED WILBATROSS

A CORN FROM THE TOE OF A UNICORN

THE FOUR TENTACLES OF A QUADROPUS

THE HIP (AND THE PO AND THE POT) OF A HIPPOPOTAMUS

THE SNOUT OF A PROGHOPPER

A MOLE FROM A MOLE

THE HIDE (AND THE SEEK) OF A SPOTTED WHANGDOODLE

THE WHITES OF TWELVE EGGS FROM A TREE-SQUEAK

THE THREE FEET OF A SNOZZWANGER (IF YOU CAN'T GET THREE FEET, ONE YARD WILL DO)

THE SQUARE-ROOT OF A SOUTH AMERICAN ABACUS

THE FANGS OF A VIPER (IT MUST BE A VINDSCREEN VIPER)

THE CHEST (AND THE DRAWERS) OF A WILD GROUT

When all the above are thoroughly dissolved, boil for a further twenty-seven days but do not stir. At the end of this time, all liquid will have evaporated and there will be left in the bottom of the cauldron only a hard brown lump about the size of a football. Break this open with a hammer and in the very centre of it you will find a small round pill. This pill is WONKA-VITE.

Die resep vir Wonka-Jonka

"Hier is dit!' roep meneer Wonka uit. Hy staan aan die bed se voetenent en hou 'n botteltjie in sy hand omhoog. "Die waardevolste botteltjie pille ter wêreld! En dit, terloops," sê hy en glimlag vrypostig vir ouma Georgina, "is hoekom ek nog nie self daarvan gedrink het nie. Dis gans te waardevol om op my te mors."
Hy hou die bottel oor die bed uit. Die drie oumense sit regop en rek hul maer nekke om die pille binne-in te probeer sien. Charlie en oupa Joe kom nader om ondersoek in te stel. Meneer en mevrou Bucket ook. Die etiket sê:

WONKAJONKA

Elkepilmaakjoupresies20 jaarJONGER.
WAARSKUWING!
Neem presies soveel soos
voorgeskryf deur mnr, Wonka.

Hulle sien almal die pille deur die glas. Hulle is heldergeel, en blink en bibber in die bottel. Vibreer is miskien ’n beter woord.

Hulle vibreer so vinnig dat die pille wasig word en jy nie hul vorm kan sien nie. Jy sien net hul kleur. Jy kry die indruk daar is iets baie klein maar ongelooflik sterk, iets nie heeltemal van hierdie wêreld nie, in elke pil opgesluit en dit veg om uit te kom.
“Hulle wriemel,” sê ouma Georgina. “Ek hou nie van
goed wat wriemel nie. Hoe weet ons hulle gaan nie binne-in ons aanhou wriemel ná ons hulle gedrink het nie? Soos daai Meksikaanse springboontjies van Charlie wat ek ’n paar jaar gelede ingesluk het. Onthou jy nog, Charlie?”
“Ek het gesê Ouma moet dit nie drink nie.”
“Hulle het ’n maand lank aanhou spring binne-in my,”
sê ouma Georgina. “Ek kon nie stilsit nie!”
“As ek een van daardie pille gaan drink, wil ek darem eers weet wat daarin is,” sê ouma Josephine.
“Ek neem u nie kwalik nie,” sê meneer Wonka. “Maar die resep is geweldig ingewikkeld. Wag ’n bietjie … Ek het dit iewers neergeskryf…” Hy begin in sy swaelstertbaadjie se sakke rondsoek. “Ek weet dis hier iewers,” sê hy. “Ek kon dit nie verloor het nie. Ek hou al my waardevolste en belangrikste goed in hierdie sakke. Die probleem is, daar’s so baie van hulle …” Hy begin die sakke leegmaak en pak die inhoud op die bed uit - ’n tuisgemaakte kettie
… ’n klimtol … ’n gebakte poets-eier van rubber … ’n snytjie salami… ’n tand met ’n vulsel in… ’n stinkbom…
’n pakkie jeukpoeier … “Dit moet hier wees, dit moet, dit moet,” mompel hy aanhoudend. “Ek het dit so versigtig gebêre … A! Hier is dit!” Hy vou ’n opgefrommelde stukkie papier oop, stryk dit glad, hou dit in die lug op en begin lees:

RESEP VIR WONKAJONKA

Neem ’n blok van die allerbeste sjokolade, een ton in gewig (of twintig sakke gebreekte sjokolade, wat ook al die maklikste is). Plaas die sjokolade in ’n baie groot kookpot en smelt dit oor rooiwarm vlamme. Verminder die hitte effens sodra die sjokolade gesmelt is sodat dit nie aanbrand nie, maar hou aan om dit te kook. Voeg nou die volgende by in presies die volgorde waarin dit aangegee word, roer die heeltyd deeglik en laat elke item eers smelt voor jy die volgende een byvoeg:

’N MANTIKOOR SE PENS (EN POOTJIES)
’N OLIFANT SE OLIE (EN REMVLOEISTOF) DRIE VAN ’N WIPPELVOËL SE EIERWIPGELE
’N EELT VAN ’N VLAKVARK SE SITVLAK
’N HALWE KELKIE VAN ’N KELKIEWYN SE WYN
’N BASILISK SE HANEKAM (ONGEKAM)
’N ONS VAN ’N JONG SLYMSKRAPER SE DONS TWEE HARE (EN OOK SYNE) VAN ’N SEEKAT

SEKOP

’N WILBATROS SE ALBATROS

SES EENHORINGS SE LIDDORINGS

’N AGTVOETIGE GOGGA SE VYF POTE
’N DINOSOURUS SE DINO (LOS DIE SOU EN DIE RUS)
’N WILDEBEES SE WILD (EN MAK, AS JY DIT
KAN VANG)

TWAALF MOSSIES SE MOESIES

’N NAALDEKOKER SE NAALD (SONDER ’N SIGAAR IN SY KOKER)
’N BRULPADDA SE BRUL (EN SY BRIL)
’N SUID-AMERIKAANSE ABAKUS SE VIERKANTSWORTEL
’N KAT SE BLAD (EN KATTEBAK)
’N IETERMAGÓ SE GORT WAT GAAR IS TWEE KRISMISROSE SE MIS (EN RAAK)

Wanneer al die bogenoemde bestanddele deeglik opgelos is, kook jy die mengsel vir ’n verdere sewe-en-twintig dae, maar sonder om dit te roer. Aan die einde van hierdie tydperk sal al die vloeistof verdamp het en al wat onder in die kookpot sal oor wees, is ’n harde bruin klont, omtrent so groot soos ’n sokkerbal. Kap dit met ’n hamer oop en reg in die middel sal jy ’n klein, ronde pilletjie aantref.
Hierdie pil is WONKAJONKA.

Good-bye Georgina

When Mr Wonka had finished reading the recipe, he carefully folded the paper and put it back into his pocket. ‘A very, very complicated mixture,’ he said. ‘So can you wonder it took me so long to get it just right?’ He held the bottle up high and gave it a little shake and the pills rattled loudly inside it, like glass beads. ‘Now, sir,’ he said, offering the bottle first to Grandpa George. ‘Will you take one pill or two?’

‘Will you solemnly swear,’ said Grandpa George, ‘that it will do what you say it will and nothing else?’

Mr Wonka placed his free hand on his heart. ‘I swear it,’ he said.

Charlie edged forward. Grandpa Joe came with him. The two of them always stayed close together. ‘Please excuse me for asking,’ Charlie said, ‘but are you really absolutely sure you’ve got it quite right?’

‘Whatever makes you ask a funny question like that?’ said Mr Wonka.

‘I was thinking of the gum you gave to Violet Beauregarde,’ Charlie said.

‘So that’s what’s bothering you!’ cried Mr Wonka. ‘But don’t you

understand, my dear boy, that I never did give that gum to Violet? She snatched it without permission. And I shouted, "Stop! Don't! Spit it out!" But the silly girl took no notice of me. Now Wonka-Vite is altogether different. I am offering these pills to your grandparents. I am recommending them. And when taken according to my instructions, they are as safe as sugar-candy!'

'Of course they are!' cried Mr Bucket. 'What are you waiting for, all of you!' An extraordinary change had come over Mr Bucket since he had entered the Chocolate Room. Normally he was a pretty timid sort of person. A lifetime devoted to screwing caps on to the tops of toothpaste tubes in a toothpaste factory had turned him into a rather shy and quiet man. But the sight of the marvellous Chocolate Factory had made his spirits soar. What is more, this business of the pills seemed to have given him a terrific kick. 'Listen!' he cried, going up to the edge of the bed. 'Mr Wonka's offering you a new life! Grab it while you can!'

'It's a delicious sensation,' Mr Wonka said. 'And it's very quick. You lose a year a second. Exactly one year falls away from you every second that goes by!' He stepped forward and placed the bottle of pills gently in the middle of the bed. 'So here you are, my dears,' he said. 'Help yourselves!'

'Come on!' cried all the Oompa-Loompas together.

'Come on, old friends, and do what's right!

Come make your lives as bright as bright!

Just take a dose of this delight!

This heavenly magic dynamite!

You can't go wrong, you must go right!

IT'S WILLY WONKA'S WONKA-VITE!'

This was too much for the old people in the bed. All three of them made a dive for the bottle. Six scrawny hands shot out and started scrabbling to get hold of it. Grandma Georgina got it. She gave a grunt of triumph and unscrewed the cap and tipped all the little brilliant yellow pills on to the blanket on her lap. She cupped her hands around them so the others couldn't reach out and snatch them. 'All

right!' she shouted excitedly, counting them quickly. 'There's twelve pills here! That's six for me and three each for you!'

'Hey! That's not fair!' shrilled Grandma Josephine. 'It's four for each of us!'

'Four each is right!' cried Grandpa George. 'Come on, Georgina! Hand over my share!'

Mr Wonka shrugged his shoulders and turned his back on them. He hated squabbles. He hated it when people got grabby and selfish. Let them fight it out among themselves, he thought, and he walked away. He walked slowly down toward the chocolate waterfall. It was an unhappy truth, he told himself, that nearly all people in the world behave badly when there is something really big at stake. Money is the thing they fight over most. But these pills were bigger than money. They could do things for you no amount of money could ever do. They were worth at least a million dollars a pill. He knew plenty of very rich men who would gladly pay that much in order to become twenty years younger. He reached the riverbank below the waterfall and he stood there gazing at the great gush and splash of melted chocolate pouring down. He had hoped the noise of the waterfall would drown the arguing voices of the old grandparents in the bed, but it didn't. Even with his back to them, he still couldn't help hearing most of what they were saying.

'I got them first!' Grandma Georgina was shouting. 'So they're mine to share out!'

'Oh no they're not!' shrilled Grandma Josephine. 'He didn't give them to you! He gave them to all three of us!'

'I want my share and no one's going to stop me getting it!' yelled Grandpa George. 'Come on, woman! Hand them over!'

Then came the voice of Grandpa Joe, cutting in sternly through the rabble. 'Stop this at once!' he ordered. 'All three of you! You're behaving like savages!'

'You keep out of this, Joe, and mind your own business!' said Grandma Josephine.

'Now you be careful, Josie,' Grandpa Joe went on. 'Four is too many for one person anyway.'

'That's right,' Charlie said. 'Please, Grandma, why don't you just take one or two each like Mr Wonka said, and that'll leave some for Grandpa Joe and Mother and Father.'

'Yes!' cried Mr Bucket. 'I'd love one!'

'Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful,' said Mrs Bucket, 'to be twenty years younger and not have aching feet any more! Couldn't you spare just one for each of us, Mother?'

'I'm afraid not,' said Grandma Georgina. 'These pills are specially reserved for us three in the bed. Mr Wonka said so!'

'I want my share!' shouted Grandpa George. 'Come on, Georgina! Dish them out!'

'Hey, let me go, you brute!' cried Grandma Georgina. 'You're hurting me! Ow! … ALL RIGHT! All right! I'll share them out if you'll stop twisting my arm … That's better … Here's four for Josephine … and four for George … and four for me.'

'Good,' said Grandpa George. 'Now who's got some water?'

Without looking around, Mr Wonka knew that three Oompa-Loompas would be running to the bed with three glasses of water. Oompa-Loompas were always ready to help. There was a brief pause, and then:

'Well, here goes!' cried Grandpa George.

'Young and beautiful, that's what I'll be!' shouted Grandma Josephine.

'Farewell, old age!' cried Grandma Georgina. 'All together now! Down the hatch!'

Then there was silence. Mr Wonka was itching to turn around and look, but he forced himself to wait. Out of the corner of one eye he could see a group of Oompa-Loompas, all motionless, their eyes fixed intently in the direction of the big bed over by the Elevator. Then Charlie's voice broke the silence. 'Wow!' he was shouting. 'Just look at that! It's … it's incredible!'

'I can't believe it!' Grandpa Joe was yelling. 'They're getting younger

and younger! They really are! Just look at Grandpa George's hair!'

'And his teeth!' cried Charlie. 'Hey, Grandpa! You're getting lovely white teeth all over again!'

'Mother!' shouted Mrs Bucket to Grandma Georgina. 'Oh, Mother! You're beautiful! You're so young! And just look at Dad!' she went on, pointing at Grandpa George. 'Isn't he handsome!'

'What's it feel like, Josie?' asked Grandpa Joe excitedly. 'Tell us what it feels like to be back to thirty again! … Wait a minute! You look younger than thirty! You can't be a day more than twenty now! … But that's enough, isn't it! … I should stop there if I were you! Twenty's quite young enough! …'

Mr Wonka shook his head sadly and passed a hand over his eyes. Had you been standing very close to him you would have heard him murmuring softly under his breath, 'Oh, deary deary me, here we go again …'

'Mother!' cried Mrs Bucket, and now there was a shrill note of alarm in her voice. 'Why don't you stop, Mother! You're going too far! You're way under twenty! You can't be more than fifteen! … You're … you're … you're ten … you're getting smaller, Mother!'

'Josie!' shouted Grandpa Joe. 'Hey, Josie! Don't do it, Josie! You're shrinking! You're a little girl! Stop her, somebody! Quick!'

'They're all going too far!' cried Charlie.

'They took too much,' said Mr Bucket.

'Mother's shrinking faster than any of them!' wailed Mrs Bucket. 'Mother! Can't you hear me, Mother? Can't you stop?'

'My heavens, isn't it quick!' said Mr Bucket, who seemed to be the only one enjoying it. 'It really is a year a second!'

'But they've hardly got any more years left!' wailed Grandpa Joe.

'Mother's no more than four now!' Mrs Bucket cried out. 'She's three … two … one … Gracious me! What's happening to her! Where's she gone? Mother? Georgina! Where are you? Mr Wonka! Come quickly! Come here, Mr Wonka! Something frightful's happened! Something's

gone wrong! My old mother's disappeared!'

Mr Wonka sighed and turned around and walked slowly and quite calmly back toward the bed.

'Where's my mother?' bawled Mrs Bucket.

'Look at Josephine!' cried Grandpa Joe. 'Just look at her! I ask you!'

Mr Wonka looked first at Grandma Josephine. She was sitting in the middle of the huge bed, bawling her head off. 'Wa! Wa! Wa!' she said. 'Wa! Wa! Wa! Wa! Wa!'

'She's a screaming baby!' cried Grandpa Joe. 'I've got a screaming baby for a wife!'

'The other one's Grandpa George!' Mr Bucket said, smiling happily. 'The slightly bigger one there crawling around. He's my wife's father.'

'That's right! He's my father!' wailed Mrs Bucket. 'And where's Georgina, my old mother? She's vanished! She's nowhere, Mr Wonka! She's absolutely nowhere! I saw her getting smaller and smaller and in the end she got so small she just disappeared into thin air! What I want to know is where's she gone to! And how in the world are we going to get her back!'

'Ladies and gentlemen!' said Mr Wonka, coming up close and raising both hands for silence. 'Please, I beg you, do not ruffle yourselves! There's nothing to worry about …'

'You call it nothing!' cried poor Mrs Bucket. 'When my old mother's gone down the drain and my father's a howling baby …'

'A lovely baby,' said Mr Wonka.

'I quite agree,' said Mr Bucket.

'What about my Josie?' cried Grandpa Joe.

'What about her?' said Mr Wonka.

'Well …'

'A great improvement, sir,' said Mr Wonka, 'don't you agree?'

‘Oh, yes!’ said Grandpa Joe. ‘I mean NO! What am I saying? She’s a howling baby!’

‘But in perfect health,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘May I ask you, sir, how many pills she took?’

‘Four,’ said Grandpa Joe glumly. ‘They all took four.’

Mr Wonka made a wheezing noise in his throat and a look of great sorrow came over his face. ‘Why oh why can’t people be more sensible?’ he said sadly. ‘Why don’t they listen to me when I tell them something? I explained very carefully beforehand that each pill makes the taker exactly twenty years younger. So if Grandma Josephine took four of them, she automatically became younger by four times twenty, which is … wait a minute now … four twos are eight … add a nought … that’s eighty … so she automatically became younger by eighty years. How old, sir, was your wife, if I may ask, before this happened?’

‘She was eighty last birthday,’ Grandpa Joe answered. ‘She was eighty and three months.’

‘There you are, then!’ cried Mr Wonka, flashing a happy smile. ‘The Wonka-Vite worked perfectly! She is now precisely three months old! And a plumper rosier infant I’ve never set eyes on!’

‘Nor me,’ said Mr Bucket. ‘She’d win a prize in any baby competition.’

‘First prize,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘Cheer up, Grandpa,’ said Charlie, taking the old man’s hand in his. ‘Don’t be sad. She’s a beautiful baby.’

‘Madam,’ said Mr Wonka, turning to Mrs Bucket. ‘How old, may I ask, was Grandpa George, your father?’

‘Eighty-one,’ wailed Mrs Bucket. ‘He was eighty-one exactly.’

‘Which makes him a great big bouncing one-year-old boy now,’ said Mr Wonka happily.

‘How splendid!’ said Mr Bucket to his wife. ‘You’ll be the first person in the world to change her father’s nappies!’

'He can change his own rotten nappies!' said Mrs Bucket. 'What I want to know is where's my mother? Where's Grandma Georgina?'

'Ah-ha,' said Mr Wonka. 'Oh-ho … Yes, indeed … Where oh where has Georgina gone? How old, please, was the lady in question?'

'Seventy-eight,' Mrs Bucket told him.

'Well, of course!' laughed Mr Wonka. 'That explains it!'

'What explains what?' snapped Mrs Bucket.

'My dear madam,' said Mr Wonka. 'If she was only seventy-eight and she took enough Wonka-Vite to make her eighty years younger, then naturally she's vanished. She's bitten off more than she could chew! She's taken off more years than she had!'

'Explain yourself,' said Mrs Bucket.

'Simple arithmetic,' said Mr Wonka. 'Subtract eighty from seventy-eight and what do you get?'

'Minus two!' said Charlie.

'Hooray!' said Mr Bucket. 'My mother-in-law's minus two years old!'

'Impossible!' said Mrs Bucket.

'It's true,' said Mr Wonka.

'And where is she now, may I ask?' said Mrs Bucket.

'That's a good question,' said Mr Wonka. 'A very good question. Yes, indeed. Where is she now?'

'You don't have the foggiest idea, do you?'

'Of course I do,' said Mr Wonka. 'I know exactly where she is.'

'Then tell me!'

'You must try to understand,' said Mr Wonka, 'that if she is now minus two, she's got to add two more years before she can start again from

nought. She's got to wait it out.'

'Where does she wait?' said Mrs Bucket.

'In the Waiting Room, of course,' said Mr Wonka.

BOOM!-BOOM! said the drums of the Oompa-Loompa band. BOOM-BOOM! BOOM-BOOM! And all the Oompa-Loompas, all the hundreds of them standing there in the Chocolate Room began to sway and hop and dance to the rhythm of the music. 'Attention, please!' they sang.

'Attention, please! Attention, please!

Don't dare to talk! Don't dare to sneeze!

Don't doze or daydream! Stay awake!

Your health, your very life's at stake!

Ho-ho, you say, they can't mean me.

Ha-ha, we answer, wait and see.

Did any of you ever meet

A child called Goldie Pinklesweet?

Who on her seventh birthday went

To stay with Granny down in Kent.

At lunchtime on the second day

Of dearest little Goldie's stay,

Granny announced, "I'm going down

To do some shopping in the town."

(D'you know why Granny didn't tell

The child to come along as well?

She's going to the nearest inn

To buy herself a double gin.)

So out she creeps. She shuts the door.

And Goldie, after making sure

That she is really by herself,

Goes quickly to the medicine shelf,

And there, her little greedy eyes

See pills of every shape and size,

Such fascinating colours too —

Some green, some pink, some brown, some blue.

“All right,” she says, “let’s try the brown.”

She takes one pill and gulps it down.

“Yum-yum!” she cries. “Hooray! What fun!

They’re chocolate-coated, every one!”

She gobbles five, she gobbles ten,

She stops her gobbling only when

The last pill’s gone. There are no more.

Slowly she rises from the floor.

She stops. She hiccups. Dear, oh dear,

She starts to feel a trifle queer.

You see, how could young Goldie know,

For nobody had told her so,

That Grandmama, her old relation,

Suffered from frightful constipation.

This meant that every night she'd give

Herself a powerful laxative,

And all the medicines that she'd bought

Were naturally of this sort.

The pink and red and blue and green

Were all extremely strong and mean.

But far more fierce and meaner still,

Was Granny's little chocolate pill.

Its blast effect was quite uncanny.

It used to shake up even Granny.

In point of fact she did not dare

To use them more than twice a year.

So can you wonder little Goldie

Began to feel a wee bit mouldy?

Inside her tummy, something stirred.

A funny gurgling sound was heard,

And then, oh dear, from deep within,

The ghastly rumbling sounds begin!

They rumbilate and roar and boom!

They bounce and echo round the room!

The floorboards shake and from the wall

Some bits of paint and plaster fall.

Explosions, whistles, awful bangs

Were followed by the loudest clangs.

(A man next door was heard to say,

“A thunderstorm is on the way.”)

But on and on the rumbling goes.

A window cracks, a lamp-bulb blows.

Young Goldie clutched herself and cried,

“There’s something wrong with my inside!”

This was, we very greatly fear,

The understatement of the year.

For wouldn’t any child feel crummy,

With loud explosions in her tummy?

Granny, at half past two, came in,

Weaving a little from the gin,

But even so she quickly saw

The empty bottle on the floor.

“My precious laxatives!” she cried.

“I don’t feel well,” the girl replied.

Angrily Grandma shook her head.

“I’m really not surprised,” she said.

“Why can’t you leave my pills alone?”

With that, she grabbed the telephone

And shouted, “Listen, send us quick

An ambulance! A child is sick!

It’s number fifty, Fontwell Road!

Come fast! I think she might explode!”

We’re sure you do not wish to hear

About the hospital and where

They did a lot of horrid things

With stomach-pumps and rubber rings.

Let’s answer what you want to know:

Did Goldie live or did she go?

The doctors gathered round her bed.

“There’s really not much hope,” they said.

“She’s going, going, gone!” they cried.

“She’s had her chips! She’s dead! She’s dead!”

“I’m not so sure,” the child replied.

And all at once she opened wide

Her great big bluish eyes and sighed,

And gave the anxious docs a wink,

And said, “I’ll be okay, I think.”

So Goldie lived and back she went

At first to Granny’s place in Kent.

Her father came the second day

And fetched her in a Chevrolet,

And drove her to their home in Dover.

But Goldie's troubles were not over.

You see, if someone takes enough

Of any highly dangerous stuff,

One will invariably find

Some traces of it left behind.

It pains us greatly to relate

That Goldie suffered from this fate.

She'd taken such a massive fill

Of this unpleasant kind of pill,

It got into her blood and bones,

It messed up all her chromosomes,

It made her constantly upset,

And she could never really get

The beastly stuff to go away.

And so the girl was forced to stay

For seven hours every day

Within the everlasting gloom

Of what we call The Ladies Room.

And after all, the W.C.

Is not the gayest place to be.

So now, before it is too late,

Take heed of Goldie's dreadful fate.

And seriously, all jokes apart,

Do promise us across your heart

That you will never help yourself

To medicine from the medicine shelf.'

Tot siens, Georgina

Toe meneer Wonka die resep klaar gelees het, vou hy die papier versigtig op en sit dit terug in sy sak. "'n Baie, baie ingewikkelde mengsel," sê hy. "So nou kan julle verstaan hoekom dit my so lank geneem het om dit perfek reg te kry." Hy hou die botteltjie in die lug en skud dit sodat die pille daarin hard ratel soos glaskrale. "Reg, Oupa," sê hy en bied die bottel eerste vir oupa George aan, "een pil vir u, of twee?"
"Sweer u plegtig," vra oupa George, "dat dit sal doen wat u sê dit sal doen, en niks anders nie?"
Meneer Wonka sit sy hand op sy hart. "Ek sweer," sê hy. Charlie beur vorentoe. Oupa Joe ook. Hulle twee bly
altyd naby aan mekaar. "Ekskuus dat ek vra," sê Charlie, "maar is u regtig absoluut seker u het dit perfek reg gekry?"
"Wat laat jou so 'n vreemde vraag vra?" wil meneer
Wonka weet.
"Ek het gedink aan die kougom wat u vir Violet
Beauregarde gegee het," sê Charlie.
"So dis wat jou pla!" roep meneer Wonka uit. "Maar verstaan jy dan nie, my liewe seun? Ek het daai kougom nooit vir Violet gegee nie. Sy het dit sonder
my toestemming gegryp. En ek het geskree: 'Stop! Moenie! Spoeg dit uit!' Maar daai lawwe meisiekind het haar nie aan my gesteur nie. Hierdie Wonka-Jonka is iets totaal anders. Dis pille wat ek vir jou grootouers aanbied. Pille wat ek vir hulle aanbeveel. Wanneer dit volgens my instruksies geneem word, is dit so veilig soos suikerklontjies!
"Natuurlik is dit!" sê meneer Bucket. "Waarvoor

wag julle almal nog?” Meneer Bucket het heeltemal verander vandat hy by die Sjokoladesaal ingestap het. Hy is gewoonlik ’n taamlik teruggetrokke soort mens, ’n Leeftyd van doppies op tandepastabuisies vasdraai het hom in ’n ietwat skaam en stil man verander. Maar die fabelagtige Sjokoladefabriek het hom skielik uitgelate gemaak. Wat meer is, dit lyk of die storie van die pille hom nuwe lewenslus gee. “Luister!” roep hy uit en kom tot aan die rand van die bed. “Meneer Wonka bied vir julle ’n nuwe lewe aan! Gryp dit aan terwyl julle kan!”
“Dis ’n heerlike sensasie,” sê meneer Wonka. “En
dit werk baie gou. Jy skud ’n jaar per sekonde af. Elke sekonde wat verbygaan, word jy presies ’n jaar jonger!” Hy tree vorentoe en sit die bottel pille versigtig in die middel van die bed neer. “So daar’s hy, liewe mense, “ sê hy. “Help julleself!”
“Komaan!” roep al die Oempa-Loempas saam uit.
“Komaan, liewe vriende, hou op huiwer, Word weer jonk en vars en suiwer! Drink van hierdie magiese dinamiet;
Dis die einde van al julle verdriet! Gryp die kans wat die lewe julle bied!
DRINK WILLY WONKA SE WONKAJONKA!
Dit is een te veel vir die oumense in die bed. Al drie van hulle duik op die bottel af. Ses benerige hande skiet uit en skarrel om dit eerste beet te kry. Ouma Georgina wen. Sy snork triomfantelik, skroef die doppie af en gooi al die blink klein geel pilletjies op die kombers op haar skoot uit. Sy maak haar hande bak om die pille sodat die ander dit nie kan bykom en gryp nie. “Reg!” sê sy opgewonde en tel die pille vinnig. “Hier is twaalf van hulle! Dis ses vir my en drie vir elkeen van julle!”
“Haai! Dis nie regverdig nie!” gil ouma Josephine skril.
“Dis vier vir elkeen van ons!”
“Vier elk, ja!” roep oupa George uit. “Komaan, Georgina! Gee vir my my deel!”
Meneer Wonka trek sy skouers op en draai sy rug op
hulle. Hy haat so ’n gekibbel. Hy haat dit wanneer mense gierig en selfsugtig word. Laat hulle dit tussen mekaar uitbaklei, dink hy by homself en loop weg. Hy loop stadig af na die sjokoladewaterval. Dit is ongelukkig so, sê hy vir homself, dat byna alle mense ter wêreld hulle sleg gedra wanneer daar iets werklik groots op die spel is. Geld is die ding waaroor mense die meeste baklei. Maar hierdie pille is meer as geld werd. Hulle kan vir jou dinge doen wat geen geld ooit kan doen nie.
Elke pil is ten minste ’n miljoen dollar werd. Hy weet
van baie skatryk mense wat met graagte soveel sal betaal om twintig jaar jonger te kan word. Hy kom by die rivieroewer onder die waterval en staan daar en staar na die gesmelte sjokolade wat

borrelend en spattend in die rivier neerstort. Hy hoop die geluid van die waterval sal die oumense in die bed se bakleiery verdoof, maar dit gebeur nie. Selfs al staan hy met sy rug na hulle kan hy nie help om die meeste van wat hulle sê te hoor nie.
“Ek het hulle eerste gekry!” skree ouma Georgina. “So
ek kan besluit hoe om hulle uit te deel!”
“Issie!” gil ouma Josephine. “Hy’t hulle nie vir jou gegee nie! Hy’t hulle vir ons al drie gegee!”
“Ek wil my deel hê en niemand gaan my keer om dit
te kry nie!” roep oupa George uit. “Komaan, vroumens! Gee vir my myne!”
Skielik sny oupa Joe se stem streng deur die deurmekaar gepraat. “Hou dadelik op hiermee!” beveel hy. “Al drie van julle! Julle gedra julle soos barbare!”
“Hou jou neus hieruit, Joe. Dit het niks met jou uit te
waai nie!” sê ouma Josephine.
“Oppas, Josie,” waarsku oupa Joe. “Vier is in elk geval te veel vir een persoon.”
“Dis reg,” sê Charlie. “Asseblief, Ouma, drink net een
of twee soos meneer Wonka gesê het, dan bly daar nog vir oupa Joe en Mamma en Pappa ook oor.”
“Ja!” roep meneer Bucket uit. “Ek sal baie graag een wil he!”
“Ai, dit sal wonderlik wees,” sê mevrou Bucket. “Dink net, om twintig jaar jonger te wees en nie meer seer voete te hê nie! Kan Mammie nie asseblief net een aan elkeen van ons afstaan nie?”
“Ek is bevrees nie,” sê ouma Georgina. “Hierdie pille is
spesiaal net vir ons drie hier in die bed. Meneer Wonka het so gesê!”
“Ek wil my deel he!” skree oupa George. “Komaan,
Georgina! Deel hulle uit!”
“Haai, los my, jou buffel!” gil ouma Georgina. “Jy maak my seer! Au!… NOU GOED! Goed dan! Ek sal hulle uitdeel as jy ophou om my arm seer te maak… Dis beter … Hier’s vier vir Josephine … en vier vir George … en vier vir my.”
“Reg,” sê oupa George. “Wie’t vir ons water?
Sonder om eers om te kyk weet meneer Wonka sommer drie Oempa-Loempas sal met drie glase water na die bed toe hardloop. Oempa-Loempas is altyd gereed om te help. Daar is ’n kort pouse en dan:
“Wei, hier gaan ek!” roep oupa George uit.
“Ek gaan weer jonk en beeldskoon mooi wees!” gil ouma Josephine.
“Vaarwel, ouderdom!” groet ouma Georgina. “Almal
saam! Sluk hulle af.”
Dan is daar stilte. Meneer Wonka jeuk om om te draai en te kyk, maar hy dwing homself om te wag. Uit die hoek van sy een oog sien hy ’n groep Oempa-Loempas, almal bewegingloos, hul oë vasgenael op die

groot bed daar bo die Glashyser. Dan verbreek Charlie se stem die stilte. “Wow!” roep hy uit. “Kyk! Dis … dis ongelooflik!”
“Ek kan dit nie glo nie!” snak oupa Joe verbaas. “Hulle
raak jonger en jonger! Sowaar! Kyk net oupa George se hare!”
“En sy tande!” skree Charlie. “Haai, Oupa! Oupa se
tande word almal weer mooi spierwit!”
“Mammie!” sê mevrou Bucket vir ouma Georgina. “Mammie lyk pragtig! So mooi en jonk! En kyk net vir Pappie!” gaan sy aan en wys na oupa George. “Is hy nie aantreklik nie?”
“Hoe voel dit, Josie?” vra oupa Joe opgewonde. “Vertel
vir ons hoe voel dit om weer dertig te wees! … Wag ’n bietjie! Jy lyk jonger as dertig! Jy kan nie nou ’n dag ouer as twintig wees nie!… Maar dis nou genoeg, hoor!… As ek jy is, sal ek nou ophou! Twintig is meer as jonk genoeg!…”
Meneer Wonka skud sy kop hartseer en vee met sy
hand oor sy oë. As jy baie na aan hom gestaan het, sou
jy kon hoor hoe fluister hy onderlangs: “O, liewe, liewe land, hier gaan ons al weer …”
“Mammie!” roep mevrou Bucket uit en nou is daar ’n paniekerige klankie in haar stem. “Hoekom hou Mammie nie nou op nie? Mammie gaan te ver! Mammie is al baie jonger as twintig! Niks meer as vyftien nie!… Mammie … is skaars … skaars tien … Mammie raak al hoe kleiner!”
“Josie!” skree oupa Joe. “Haai, Josie! Moenie dit doen
nie, Josie! Jy krimp! Jy’s ’n klein meisietjie! Keer haar, iemand! Gou!”
“Hulle gaan almal te ver!” gil Charlie.
“Hulle het te veel van die pille gedrink,” sê meneer
Bucket.
“Mammie krimp vinniger as die ander!” kerm mevrou Bucket. “Mammie! Kan Mammie my hoor1 Hou asseblief op!”
“Hemel, maar dit gaan gou!” sê meneer Bucket, wat lyk of hy die enigste een is wat dit geniet. “Dis regtig ’n jaar
’n sekonde!”
“Maar hulle het skaars enige jare meer oor!” weeklaag oupa Joe.
“Mammie is nou niks meer as vier nie!” roep mevrou
Bucket uit. “Sy’s drie … twee … een … Goeie genugtig! Wat gebeur met haar? Wat het van haar geword? Mammie! Georgina! Waar is Mammie? Meneer Wonka! Kom gou! Kom hier, meneer Wonka! Hier’s iets verskrikliks aan die gang! Hier’t iets verkeerd gegaan! My ou moeder het verdwyn!”
Meneer Wonka sug en draai om en loop stadig en doodkalm terug na die bed.
“Waar is my ma?” huil mevrou Bucket.
“Kyk vir Josephine!” skree oupa Joe. “Kyk net vir haar! Bid jou dit

aan!”
Meneer Wonka kyk eers na ouma Josephine. Sy sit in die middel van die yslike bed en skree haar longe uit. “Wha! Wha! Wha!” sê sy. “Wha! Wha! Wha! Wha! Wha!”
“Sy’s ’n skreeuende baba!” roep oupa Joe uit. “My vrou is ’n skreeuende baba!”
“Die ander een is oupa George,” sê meneer Bucket en glimlag gelukkig. “Die effens groter een wat daar rondkruip. Hy’s my vrou se pa.”
“Dis reg! Hy’s my pa!” weeklaag mevrou Bucket. “En waar’s Georgina, my ou moeder? Sy’t verdwyn! Sy’s nêrens nie, meneer Wonka! Sy’s absoluut nêrens nie! Ek het haar gesien kleiner en kleiner word en op die ou end was sy só klein dat sy net in die niet verdwyn het! Ek wil weet waarheen sy is! En hoe ons haar gaan terugkry!”
“Dames en here!” sê meneer Wonka. Hy kom nog nader en lig sy hande om almal stil te maak. “Asseblief, ek smeek julle, moenie julle so ontstel nie! Daar is niks om oor bekommerd te wees nie …”
“Jy noem dit niks!” gil arme mevrou Bucket. “My ou moeder is skoonveld en my pa is ’n skreeuende baba …”
“’n Lieflike baba,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ek stem saam,” sê meneer Bucket. “Wat van my Josie?” skree oupa Joe. “Wat van haar?” vra meneer Wonka. “Wei…”
“Dis ’n groot verbetering, meneer,” sê meneer Wonka. “Stem u nie saam nie?
“O ja!” sê oupa Joe. “Ek bedoel, NEE! Wat sê ek tog? Sy’s ’n skreeuende baba!”
“Maar blakend gesond,” sê meneer Wonka, “Mag ek u
vra, Oupa, hoeveel pille sy gedrink het?”
“Vier,” sê oupa Joe mismoedig. “Hulle het almal vier gedrink.”
Meneer Wonka hyg na asem en sy keel maak ’n
fluitgeluid. Hy kry ’n droewige trek op sy gesig. “Hoekom, o hoekom kan mense nie meer verstandig wees nie?” sê hy hartseer. “Hoekom luister hulle nie na my wanneer ek vir hulle iets sê nie? Ek het voor die tyd mooi verduidelik dat elke pil die een wat dit drink presies twintig jaar jonger maak. So as ouma Josephine vier gedrink het, het sy outomaties vier maal twintig keer jonger geword het, en dit is … wag ’n bietjie … vier maal twee is agt… en sit
’n nul by … dis tagtig … so sy het outomaties tagtig jaar jonger geword. Hoe oud, Oupa, was u vrou, as ek mag vra, voor dit alles gebeur het?
“Sy was met haar vorige verjaardag tagtig,” antwoord oupa Joe. “Sy was nou tagtig jaar en drie maande oud.”
“Nou ja, daar het julle dit!” roep meneer Wonka uit en glimlag tevrede. “Die Wonka-Jonka het perfek gewerk! Sy is dan nou presies

drie maande oud! En ek het nog nooit
’n molliger en bloesender baba gesien nie!”
“Ek ook nie,” sê mevrou Bucket. “Sy sal ’n prys in enige babakompetisie wen.”
“Eerste prys,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Toemaar, Oupa,” sê Charlie en neem die ou man se hand in syne. “Moenie hartseer wees nie. Sy’s ’n pragtige baba.”
“Mevrou,” sê meneer Wonka en draai na mevrou Bucket.
“Hoe oud, as ek mag vra, was oupa George, u vader?”
“Een-en-tagtig,” sê mevrou Bucket huilend. “Hy was op die kop een-en-tagtig.”
“Wat hom nou ’n fris knewel van ’n eenjarige seuntjie maak,” sê meneer Wonka gelukkig.
“Hoe wonderlik!” sê meneer Bucket vir sy vrou. “Jy sal die eerste mens in die wêreld wees wat haar pa se doeke omruil!”
“Hy kan sy eie doeke omruil!” sê mevrou Bucket. “Wat ek wil weet, is waar is my ma? Waar is ouma Georgina?”
“Ahaa,” sê meneer Wonka. “Oo-hoo … Ja, inderdaad
… Waar, o waar kan Georgina wees? Sê my asseblief net eers, hoe oud was die betrokke dame?”
“Agt-en-sewentig,” antwoord mevrou Bucket.
“Maar natuurlikl” lag meneer Wonka. “Dit verduidelik alles!”
“Wat verduidelik wat?” snou mevrou Bucket hom toe. “My liewe mevrou,” sê meneer Wonka, “as sy net agt-en-sewentig was en sy het genoeg Wonka-Jonka gedrink
om haar tagtig jaar jonger te maak, is dit vanselfsprekend dat sy verdwyn het. Sy het meer afgehap as wat sy kon inkry! Sy het meer jare afgeskud as wat sy gehad het!”
“Verduidelik,” sê mevrou Bucket.
“Dis eenvoudige wiskunde,” sê meneer Wonka. “Trek tagtig van agt-en-sewentig af en wat kry jy?”
“Minus twee!” sê Charlie.
“Hoera!” sê meneer Bucket. “My skoonma is minus twee jaar oud!”
“Onmoontlik!” sê mevrou Bucket. “Dis waar,” sê meneer Wonka.
“En waar is sy nou, as ek mag vra?” vra mevrou Bucket. “Dis ’n goeie vraag,” sê meneer Wonka, “’n Baie goeie
vraag. Ja, inderdaad. Waar is sy nou?”
“Jy het nie die vaagste benul nie, het jy?”
“Natuurlik het ek,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ek weet presies waar sy is.”
“Nou sê dan vir my!”
“Julle moet probeer verstaan,” sê meneer Wonka, “as sy nou minus twee is, moet sy nog twee jaar wag voor sy weer by nul kan begin. Sy sal moet wag tot dit verby is.
“Waar wag sy?” vra mevrou Bucket.

“In die Wagkamer, natuurlik,” sê meneer Wonka.
BOEMSOEM! sê die Oempa-Loempa-orkes se tromme. BOEM-BOEM! BOEM-BOEM! En al die Oempa-Loempas, al die honderde van hulle wat daar in die Sjokoladesaal staan, begin wieg en hop en dans op ritme van die musiek. “Aandag, asseblief!” sing hulle.

“Aandag, asseblief! Asseblief, aandag!
Wee die een wat praat! Wee die een wat lag! Wee jou as jy dut of droom! Wakker bly,
Of jou gesondheid gaan daaronder ly!
‘Ho-ho,’ sê jy, ‘praat julle met my V
‘Ha-ha,’ sê ons, ‘siejy nou stilbly!’

Het jy dalk al ooit gehoor
Van klein Annie van As?
Sy’t op haar verjaardag gaan oorslaap
By haar ouma doer ver in Raapenskraap. Ná middagete op die tweede dag
Sê liewe Annie se oumie toe sag:

‘Ek gaan ’n paar dinge in die dorp doen. Speel jy maar hier. Kom, gee my ’n soen. ’ (Raai hoekom nooi sy haar nie saam nie?
Want dit sal ’n kind glad nie betaam nie. Haar ouma is op pad na die naaste kroeg Daar drink sy haar gereeld oor ’n boeg.)

Haar oumie glip uit en sluit die deur, Waaroor Annie allesbehalwe treur.
Sy maak seker die ou vrou verkas En hardloop na die medisynekas. En daar, o, vrolikheid op note,
Is pille van alle vorms en grootte:
Die kleure is helder en onweerstaanbaar mooi
Party blou, party groen, party pienk, party rooi.
‘Reg, ’ sê sy. ‘Kom ons probeer Die bruine maar die eerste keer.’ Sy kou en sluk die pil en lag en sê:
‘Njammies! Dis lekker. Ek wil nog hê!”
Hulle’s sjokoladegeur, elke enkele een.
Sy sluk vyf, sy sluk ses, en geniet elke een.
Dan, skielik, voel sy naar en besluit om te stop. Sy verwens haarself en probeer bring hulle op. Sy hik en stik en vergeet sy was so vrolik.
Annie van As voel nou oes en olik.

Hoe kon klein Annie nou weet Haar liewe oumie het vergeet Om vir haar te vertel dat sy Erg aan hardlywigheid ly?
Dat sy saans lakseermiddels moet drink, Hoe snaaks dit ook al vir

Annie mag klink. Daarom is al die medisyne in haar kas Goed wat Oumie help om te ontlas.
Party rooi, party pienk, party groen, party blou,
Almal sterk genoeg om haar opelyf te hou. Maar die ergste van almal is die sjokoladepil, Dis só erg dat dit jou summier laat ril en gil. Dit laat jou soos ’n kanon skiet,
Dan knyp selfs Oumie verniet.
Daarom drink sy dit net twee keer ’n jaar
Anders is dit baie ongesond vir haar. So jy kan nou seker baie beter verstaan Hoe/com Annie skielik van ellende vergaan.

lets begin in haar maag werskaf en woel: Dis die allervreemdste, gorrende gevoel. En dan, o wee, van iewers diep binne-in Is daar rammelgeluide wat begin!
Dit grom en brom, dit sis en suis,
Dit gons en eggo oral deur die huis. Die houtvloere begin kriewel en kraak
Die muurpleister begin stuk-stuk los raak. Daar’s ’n ontploffing, ’n onaardse geskal, Daar’s ’n gerommel, ’n onmenslike geknal. (Die buurman gil vir sy vrou:
‘Hier’s die donderweer nou!’)
Ruite kraak, gloeilampe bars in die storm. Wie gaan betaal7 Die skade is enorm. Klein Annie snak terwyl dit voortwoed:
‘Daar’s iets fout met my binnegoed!’
Dis natuurlik baie sagkens gestel Die kind gaan behoorlik deur hel. lemand wie se ingewande so raas, Moet hulp kry, en inderhaas!
Dis vieruur wanneer Ouma weer verskyn Met ’n asem wat ruik na goedkoop uryn, Maar sy sien dadelik die leë houer
En gryp klein Annie aan die skouer:
‘My kosbare purgasie!’ gil sy skril.
‘Jy’t alles gedrink, ieder en elke pil!’
‘Help my, ek voel ek gaan dood!’ Kerm Annie in pyn en in nood.
‘Wei, dis jou verdiende loon!’
Gil Ouma en gryp die foon.
‘Stuur ’n ambulans en maak gou! Die kind se lippe is al potblou!
Dit klink miskien vir julle onbeskof, Maar sy’s op die punt om te ontplof!’

Annie word toe na Ongevalle gehaas
Te midde van haar maag se groot geraas. Hulle pomp die spul pille daar en dan uit Te midde van die vreesaanjaendste geluid. Jy wil seker nou weet: Gaan sy dit maak Of gaan die kind se hart haar versaak? Die dokters drom saam om haar bed:
‘Al wat nou nog sal help, is ’n gebed. ’

’n Verpleegster stort ’n traan. En hoop sy sal sag heengaan. Maar skielik fladder haar oë En almal om haar kyk bedroë
Hoe sy kiertsregop in die bed sit
Al is sy nog soos die dood so wit.
‘Ek dink ek gaan lewe, ’ Sê sy en sidder en bewe.
Hulle vat Annie toe na haar oumie toe terug En daai aand slaap sy soet agter haar rug. Die volgende dag kom haar pa haar haal
En luister na die riller van ’n verhaal.
Hy vat haar na hul vakansiehuis by die see, Maar sy vat haar probleme met haar mee. Mens moet oppas vir ’n oordosis.
Want dan sien jy sowaar jou Moses. As jy te veel sterk medisyne inkry, Gaan daar van dit in jou agterbly.
Dit spyt om innig om jou dit nou te moet vertel,
Maar die klein pilpoppie gaan nog steeds deur hel. Die dosis wat sy gedrink het, was massief
En nou behandel die lewe haar lelik stief. Die goed is diep in haar bene en bloed, Tot selfs in haar chromosome en goed.
Arme Annie van As is besig om haarself te vergas,
Want sy sit van soggens tot saans in die toilet vas. Haar maag werk vier-en-twintig uur ’n dag,
Sewe dae ’n week, dwarsdeur die dag en nag. Sy probeer dit halfhartig keer,
Maar dit hou net aan gebeur.
Nou bring sy haar ganse lewe deur
In die badkamer, agter ’n geslote deur.
En hoor mense hoe haar binnegoed daar ontplof, Dan lag hulle en sê: ‘Dit gaan vandag weer rofi’ Foei tog, dis ’n verskriklike lot.
Hoe durf iemand daarmee spot! Daarom wil ons jou ernstig aanraai Om liewer maar briek aan te draai. Met pille moet ’n mens jou inhou, Of jy kan dit jou lewe lank berou. ”

Vita-Wonk and Minusland

‘It’s up to you, Charlie my boy,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘It’s your factory. Shall we let your Grandma Georgina wait it out for the next two years or shall we try to bring her back right now?’

‘You don’t really mean you might be able to bring her back?’ cried Charlie.

‘There’s no harm in trying, is there … if that’s the way you want it?’

‘Oh yes! Of course I do! For Mother’s sake especially! Can’t you see how sad she is!’

Mrs Bucket was sitting on the edge of the big bed, dabbing her eyes with a hanky. ‘My poor old mum,’ she kept saying. ‘She’s minus two and I won’t see her again for months and months and months — if ever at all!’ Behind her, Grandpa Joe, with the help of an Oompa-Loompa, was feeding his three-month-old wife, Grandma Josephine, from a bottle. Alongside them, Mr Bucket was spooning something called ‘Wonka’s Squdgemallow Baby Food’ into one-year-old Grandpa George’s mouth but mostly all over his chin and chest. ‘Big deal!’ he was muttering angrily. ‘What a lousy rotten rotten this is! They tell me I’m going to the Chocolate Factory to have a good time and I finish up being a mother to my father-in-law.’

‘Everything’s under control, Charlie,’ said Mr Wonka, surveying the scene. ‘They’re doing fine. They don’t need us here. Come along! We’re off to hunt for Grandma!’ He caught Charlie by the arm and went dancing towards the open door of the Great Glass Elevator. ‘Hurry up, my dear boy, hurry up!’ he cried. ‘We’ve got to hustle if we’re going to get there before!’

‘Before what, Mr Wonka?’

‘Before she gets subtracted of course! All Minuses are subtracted! Don’t you know any arithmetic at all?’

They were in the Elevator now and Mr Wonka was searching among the hundreds of buttons for the one he wanted.

‘Here we are!’ he said, placing his finger delicately upon a tiny ivory button on which it said ‘MINUSLAND’.

The doors slid shut. And then, with a fearful whistling whirring sound the great machine leaped away to the right. Charlie grabbed Mr Wonka’s legs and held on for dear life. Mr Wonka pulled a jump-seat out of the wall and said, ‘Sit down Charlie, quick, and strap yourself in tight! This journey’s going to be rough and choppy!’ There were straps on either side of the seat and Charlie buckled himself firmly in. Mr Wonka pulled out a second seat for himself and did the same.

‘We are going a long way down,’ he said. ‘Oh, such a long way down we are going.’

The Elevator was gathering speed. It twisted and swerved. It swung sharply to the left, then it went right, then left again, and it was

heading downward all the time — down and down and down. 'I only hope,' said Mr Wonka, 'the Oompa-Loompas aren't using the other Elevator today.'

'What other Elevator?' asked Charlie.

'The one that goes the opposite way on the same track as this.'

'Holy snakes, Mr Wonka! You mean we might have a collision?'

'I've always been lucky so far, my boy … Hey! Take a look out there! Quick!'

Through the window, Charlie caught a glimpse of what seemed like an enormous quarry with a steep craggy-brown rock-face, and all over the rock-face there were hundreds of Oompa-Loompas working with picks and pneumatic drills.

'Rock-candy,' said Mr Wonka. 'That's the richest deposit of rock-candy in the world.'

The Elevator sped on. 'We're going deeper, Charlie. Deeper and deeper. We're about two hundred thousand feet down already.' Strange sights were flashing by outside, but the Elevator was travelling at such a terrific speed that only occasionally was Charlie able to recognize anything at all. Once, he thought he saw in the distance a cluster of tiny houses shaped like upside-down cups, and there were streets in between the houses and Oompa-Loompas walking in the streets. Another time, as they were passing some sort of a vast red plain dotted with things that looked like oil derricks, he saw a great spout of brown liquid spurting out of the ground high into the air. 'A gusher!' cried Mr Wonka, clapping his hands. 'A whacking great gusher! How splendid! Just when we needed it!'

'A what?' said Charlie.

'We've struck chocolate again, my boy. That'll be a rich new field. Oh, what a beautiful gusher! Just look at it go!'

On they roared, heading downward more steeply than ever now, and hundreds, literally hundreds of astonishing sights kept flashing by outside. There were giant cog-wheels turning and mixers mixing and bubbles bubbling and vast orchards of toffee-apple trees and lakes the size of football grounds filled with blue and gold and green liquid, and

everywhere there were Oompa-Loompas!

'You realize,' said Mr Wonka, 'that what you saw earlier on when you went round the factory with all those naughty little children was only a tiny corner of the establishment. It goes down for miles and miles. And as soon as possible I shall show you all the way around slowly and properly. But that will take three weeks. Right now we have other things to think about and I have important things to tell you. Listen carefully to me, Charlie. I must talk fast, for we'll be there in a couple of minutes.

'I suppose you guessed,' Mr Wonka went on, 'what happened to all those Oompa-Loompas in the Testing Room when I was experimenting with Wonka-Vite. Of course you did. They disappeared and became Minuses just like your Grandma Georgina. The recipe was miles too strong. One of them actually became Minus eighty-seven! Imagine that!'

'You mean he's got to wait eighty-seven years before he can come back?' Charlie asked.

'That's what kept bugging me, my boy. After all, one can't allow one's best friends to wait around as miserable Minuses for eighty-seven years ...'

'And get subtracted as well,' said Charlie. 'That would be frightful.'

'Of course it would, Charlie. So what did I do? "Willy Wonka," I said to myself, "if you can invent Wonka-Vite to make people younger, then surely to goodness you can also invent something else to make people older!"'

'Ah-ha!' cried Charlie. 'I see what you're getting at. Then you could turn the Minuses quickly back into Pluses and bring them home again.'

'Precisely, my dear boy, precisely — always supposing, of course, that I could find out where the Minuses had gone to!'

The Elevator plunged on, diving steeply toward the centre of the Earth. All was blackness outside now. There was nothing to be seen.

'So once again,' Mr Wonka went on, 'I rolled up my sleeves and set to work. Once again I squeezed my brain, searching for the new recipe

… I had to create age … to make people old … old, older, oldest … "Ha-ha!" I cried, for now the ideas were beginning to come. "What is the oldest living thing in the world? What lives longer than anything else?"'

'A tree,' Charlie said.

'Right you are, Charlie! But what kind of a tree? Not the Douglas Fir. Not the Oak. Not the Cedar. No no, my boy. It is a tree called the Bristlecone Pine that grows upon the slopes of Wheeler Peak in Nevada, U.S.A. You can find Bristlecone Pines on Wheeler Peak today that are over four thousand years old! This is fact, Charlie. Ask any dendrochronologist you like (and look that word up in the dictionary when you get home, will you, please?). So that started me off. I jumped into the Great Glass Elevator and rushed all over the world collecting special items from the oldest living things …

A PINT OF SAP FROM A 4000-YEAR-OLD BRISTLECONE PINE

THE TOE-NAIL CLIPPINGS FROM A 168-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN FARMER CALLED PETROVITCH GREGOROVITCH

AN EGG LAID BY A 200-YEAR-OLD TORTOISE BELONGING TO THE KING OF TONGA

THE TAIL OF A 51-YEAR-OLD HORSE IN ARABIA

THE WHISKERS OF A 36-YEAR-OLD CAT CALLED CRUMPETS

AN OLD FLEA WHICH HAD LIVED ON CRUMPETS FOR 36 YEARS

THE TAIL OF A 207-YEAR-OLD GIANT RAT FROM TIBET

THE BLACK TEETH OF A 97-YEAR OLD GRIMALKIN LIVING IN A CAVE ON MOUNT POPOCATEPETL

THE KNUCKLEBONES OF A 700-YEAR-OLD CATTALOO FROM PERU …

… All over the world, Charlie, I tracked down very old and ancient animals and took an important little bit of something from each one of them — a hair or an eyebrow or sometimes it was no more than an ounce or two of the jam scraped from between its toes while it was sleeping. I tracked down THE WHISTLE-PIG, THE BOBOLINK, THE

SKROCK, THE POLLY-FROG, THE GIANT CURLICUE, THE STINGING SLUG AND THE VENOMOUS SQUERKLE who can spit poison right into your eye from fifty yards away. But there's no time to tell you about them all now, Charlie. Let me just say quickly that in the end, after lots of boiling and bubbling and mixing and testing in my Inventing Room, I produced one tiny cupful of oily black liquid and gave four drops of it to a brave twenty-year-old Oompa-Loompa volunteer to see what happened.'

'What did happen?' Charlie asked.

'It was fantastic!' cried Mr Wonka. 'The moment he swallowed it, he began wrinkling and shrivelling up all over and his hair started dropping off and his teeth started falling out and, before I knew it, he had suddenly become an old fellow of seventy-five! And thus, my dear Charlie, was Vita-Wonk invented!'

'Did you rescue all the Oompa-Loompa Minuses, Mr Wonka?'

'Every single one of them, my boy! One hundred and thirty-one all told! Mind you, it wasn't quite as easy as all that. There were lots of snags and complications along the way… . Good heavens! We're nearly there! I must stop talking now and watch where we're going.'

Charlie realized that the Elevator was no longer rushing and roaring. It was hardly moving at all now. It seemed to be drifting. 'Undo your straps,' Mr Wonka said. 'We must get ready for action.' Charlie undid his straps and stood up and peered out. It was an eerie sight. They were drifting in a heavy grey mist and the mist was swirling and swishing around them as though driven by winds from many sides. In the distance, the mist was darker and almost black and it seemed to be swirling more fiercely than ever over there. Mr Wonka slid open the doors. 'Stand back!' he said. 'Don't fall out, Charlie, whatever you do!'

The mist came into the Elevator. It had the fusty reeky smell of an old underground dungeon. The silence was overpowering. There was no sound at all, no whisper of wind, no voice of creature or insect, and it gave Charlie a queer frightening feeling to be standing there in the middle of this grey inhuman nothingness — as though he were in another world altogether, in some place where man should never be.

'Minusland!' whispered Mr Wonka. 'This is it, Charlie! The problem now is to find her. We may be lucky … and there again, we may not!'

“Dit hang van jou af, Charlie, ou seun,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis jou fabriek. Sal ons jou ouma Georgina vir die volgende twee jaar laat sit en wag of sal ons probeer om haar nou dadelik terug te kry?”
“Bedoel jy rêrig jy kan haar dalk terugbring?” roep
Charlie uit.
“Kan nie skade doen om te probeer nie, kan dit?… As dit is wat jy wil hê.”
“O ja! Natuurlik! Veral vir my ma se ontwil! Kan jy nie sien hoe hartseer is sy nie?”
Mevrou Bucket sit op die bed se rand en vee haar oë met
’n sakdoek af. “My arme ou moeder,” sê sy aanhoudend. “Sy’s minus twee en ek gaan haar vir maande en maande en maande nie weer sien nie - indien ooit weer!” Agter haar help ’n Oempa-Loempa oupa Joe om sy drie maande oue vrou, ouma Josephine, uit ’n bottel te laat drink. Langs hulle voer meneer Bucket vir die eenjarige oupa George lepels vol van “Wonka se Wonder-Babakos”, maar die meeste daarvan beland op sy ken en bors. “Belaglik!” prewel hy kwaad. “Dis totaal en toetentaal en al bedekselslaglik! Hulle sê ons kom na die Sjokoladefabriek toe om ’n lekker tyd te hê en nou moet ek vir my skoonpa ma speel.”
“Alles is onder beheer, Charlie,” sê meneer Wonka terwyl hy die spulletjie bekyk. “Hulle kom goed reg. Hulle het ons nie hier nodig nie. Komaan! Ons gaan jou ouma soek!” Hy kry Charlie aan die arm beet en dans in die rigting van die Glashyser se oop deur. “Opskud, ou seun, opskud!” roep hy uit. “Ons moet wikkel as ons daar wil kom voor …”
“Voor wat, meneer Wonka?”
“Voor sy afgetrek word natuurlik!” Alle Minusse word afgetrek. Kan jy dan nie wiskunde doen nie?”
Hulle is nou in die hyser en meneer Wonka soek tussen die honderde knoppies na die een wat hy wil hê.
“Hier is dit!” sê hy en sit sy vinger versigtig op ’n klein ivoorknoppie waarop daar “MINUSLAND” staan.
Die deure gly toe. En met ’n grillerige gesuis en gedruis spring die masjien na regs. Charlie gryp meneer Wonka se bene en hou vas vir al wat hy werd is. Meneer Wonka slaan ’n afklapstoeltjie teen die muur af en sê: “Sit, Charlie, gou, en gord jou styf vas! Hierdie reis gaan wild en woes wees!” Daar is gordels aan albei kante van die stoel en Charlie gespe homself styf vas. Meneer Wonka klap ’n tweede stoeltjie vir homself af en doen dieselfde.
“Ons gaan ver af ondertoe,” sê hy. “Sommer baie ver
af ondertoe.”

Die hyser tel spoed op. Hy draai en swaai. Hy swenk skerp na links, vlieg dan regs, dan weer links en pyl die heeltyd verder af ondertoe - affer en affer en affer. “Ek hoop net,” sê meneer Wonka, “die Oempa-Loempas gebruik nie vandag die ander hyser nie.”
“Watter ander hyser?” vra Charlie.

“Die een wat in die teenoorgestelde rigting gaan, in dieselfde skag as hierdie een.”
“Sissende slange, meneer Wonka! Jy bedoel ons kan dalk met hulle bots?”
“Ek was tot dusver nog gelukkig, ou seun … Haai! Kyk bietjie buitentoe! Gou!”
Deur die venster sien Charlie skrams iets wat lyk soos
’n yslike steengroef met ’n steil bruin rotswand, en oral teen die rotswand werk daar Oempa-Loempas met pikke en lugbore.
“Rotslekkers,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis die rykste neerslag van rotslekkers ter wêreld.”
Die hyser vlieg verder. “Ons gaan dieper af, Charlie.
Dieper en dieper. Ons is alreeds omtrent tweehonderd duisend voet diep.” Vreemde tonele flits buite verby, maar die hyser ry teen só ’n geweldige spoed dat Charlie net nou en dan iets kan uitmaak. Een keer sien hy in die verte ’n tros klein huisies wat soos omgekeerde koppies lyk en daar is strate tussen die huise en Oempa-Loempas wat in die strate rondloop.

’n Ander keer gaan hulle verby ’n uitgestrekte rooi plein gespikkel met goed wat soos olieboortorings lyk en hy sien dik strale bruin vloeistof uit die grond tot hoog in die lug op spuit.
“’n Borrelbron!” roep meneer Wonka uit en klap sy
hande. “’n Yslike groot borrelbron! Wonderlik! Net wat ons nodig het!”

“’n Wat?” vra Charlie.
“Ons het weer sjokolade raak geboor, ou seun. Dit sal
’n ryk nuwe veld wees. O, wat ’n pragtige borrelbron! Kyk net daar!”
Hulle jaag verder, nog styler as ooit af ondertoe, en honderde, letterlik honderde verstommende tonele flits buite verby. Daar is reusagtige tandwiele wat draai en mengers wat meng en borrels wat borrel en eindelose boorde toffie-appelbome en mere so groot soos sokkervelde gevul met blou en goue en groen vloeistof, en daar is oral Oempa-Loempas!
“Besef jy,” sê meneer Wonka, “dat wat jy vroeër gesien
het toe ek jou saam met daardie stout kinders deur die fabriek rondgeneem het net ’n klein deeltjie van die hele aanleg is? Dit strek

myle en myle af ondertoe. En sodra dit moontlik is, gaan ek alles vir jou stadig en ordentlik wys. Maar dit sal drie weke neem. Ons het nou ander dinge om aan te dink en daar is belangrike goed wat ek vir jou wil vertel. Luister mooi na my, Charlie.
Ek moet vinnig praat, want ons gaan oor 'n paar mi mite daar wees.
"Ekveronderstel jy hetgeraai," gaan meneer Wonka aan,
"wat met al daardie Oempa-Loempas in die Toetskamer gebeur het toe ek met Wonka-Jonka geëksperimenteer het. Hulle het verdwyn en Minusse geword, net soos jou ouma Georgina. Die resep was gans te sterk. Een van hulle het jou waarlik Minus sewe-en-tagtig geword! Kan jy meer?"
"U bedoel hy moet nou sewe-en-tagtig jaar wag voor hy
kan terugkom?" vra Charlie.
"Dis wat so aan my bly vreet het, ou seun. Per slot van rekening kan mens jou beste vriende nie vir sewe-en-tagtig jaar as mismoedige Minusse laat rondwag nie ..." "En hulle dan nog boonop laat aftrek ook nie," sê
Charlie. "Dit sal verskriklik wees."
"Natuurlik, ja, Charlie. So wat doen ek toe? 'Willy Wonka,' het ek vir myself gesê, 'as jy Wonka-Jonka kan maak om mense jonger te maak, dan kan jy tog seer sekerlik ook iets prakseer om mense ouer te maak!"
"Aha!" roep Charlie uit. "Ek sien wat jy bedoel. Dan kan mens die Minusse vinnig in Plusse verander en hulle weer terug huis toe bring."
"Presies, my liewe ou seun, presies - bygesê natuurlik as
ek kon uitvind waarheen die Minusse verdwyn het!"
Die Glashyser duik dieper, reguit na die middel van die Aarde toe af. Nou is dit pikdonker buite. Charlie kan niks sien nie.
"So toe rol ek weer my moue op en spring van voor
af aan die werk," gaan meneer Wonka aan. "Ek het my brein ingespan en 'n nuwe resep begin soek ... Ek moes ouderdom skep ... mense oud maak ... oud, ouer, oudste ..."
'Ha-ha!' het ek uitgeroep toe nuwe idees my te binne begin skiet. 'Wat is die oudste lewende ding ter wêreld? Wat lewe langer as enigiets anders?'"
"'n Boom," sê Charlie.
"In die kol, Charlie! Maar waiter soort boom? Nie die douglasden nie. Nie die eik nie. Nie die seder nie.
O nee, ou seun. Dis 'n boom genaamd die steekkeëlden wat teen die hange van Wheeler-piek in Nevada in die VSA groei. Jy kry vandag steekkeëldenne teen Wheeler-piek wat meer as vierduisend jaar oud is! Dis 'n feit, Charlie. Vra maar vir enige dendroloog (en kyk daardie woord asseblief in die woordeboek op wanneer jy by die huis kom). So dit was my vertrekpunt. Ek het in die Groot Glashyser gespring en

regoor die wêreld gereis om spesiale monsters van die oudste lewende dinge bymekaar te maak…

’N PINT SAP VAN ’N 4000-JARIGE STEEKKEËLDEN
KNIPSELS VAN ’N 168-JARIGE RUSSIESE BOER GENAAMD PETROWIETSJ GREGOROWIETSJ SE TOONNAELS
’N EIER GELÊ DEUR ’N 200-JARIGE SKILPAD
WAT AAN DIE KONING VAN TONGA BEHOORT
’N 51-JARIGE ARABIESE PERD SE STERT
’N 36-JARIGE KAT GENAAMD KIETSIE SE SNORBAARD
’N OU VLOOI WAT 36 JAAR LANK OP KIETSIE GEWOON HET
’N 207-JARIGE REUSEROT UIT TIBET SE STERT
’N 97-JARIGE TROLLOKS WAT IN ’N GROT OP DIE BERG POPOKATEPETL BLY SE SWART TANDE
’N 100-JARIGE KATTELOE VAN PERU SE
KNEUKELBENE…

… Regoor die wêreld het ek baie ou en antieke diere en dinge opgespoor en ’n belangrike klein deeltjie van iets van elkeen van hulle gevat - ’n haar of ’n wenkbrou of soms was dit niks meer nie as ’n ons of twee koniyt wat ek tussen een se tone kon uitkrap terwyl hy slaap. Onder dié wat ek opgespoor het was DIE FLUITVARK, DIE BOBBELINK, DIE SKROK, DIE PAPEGAAI, DIE MAMEGAAI, DIE KRULKUNSTENAAR, DIE SLIKSLAK en DIE GIFTIGE SKERKEL, wat gif van vyftig tree af reg in jou oë kan spoeg. Maar daar is nie nou tyd om jou van hulle almal te vertel nie, Charlie. Laat ek net vinnig sê: uiteindelik, na baie gekook en geborrel en gemeng en getoets in my Uitvindingsaal het ek een klein koppie vol olierige swart vloeistof geproduseer en vier druppels daarvan vir ’n dapper Oempa-Loempa, ’n twintigjarige vrywilliger, gegee om te sien wat gaan gebeur.”
“Wat het gebeur?” vra Charlie.
“Dit was fantasties!” roep meneer Wonka uit. “Die oomblik toe hy dit insluk, het sy vel vol rimpels en plooie begin raak en sy hare het uitgeval en sy tande, en toe ek weer sien, was hy skielik ’n oubaas van vyf-en-sewentig! En so, my liewe Charlie, is Wonka-Oua gebore!”
“Het jy al die Oempa-Loempa Minusse gered, meneer
Wonka?”
“Elke enkele een van hulle, ou seun! Eenhonderd een-en-dertig altesaam! Maar dit was nie altyd so maklik nie.
Daar was baie hindernisse en haakplekke langs die pad … Grote genugtig! Ons is amper daar! Ek moet nou ophou ginnegaap en kyk waar ons gaan.”
Charlie besef die hyser brul en jaag glad nie meer
nie. Dit beweeg nou skaars. Dit is asof die hyser sweef. “Maak los jou

sitplekgordel,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ons moet gereed maak vir aksie.” Charlie maak die gordel los en staan op en loer buitentoe. Dit is ’n onheilspellende toneel. Hulle dryf in ’n swaar grys mis en die mis swiep en suis om hulle asof dit deur winde van alle kante af aangewaai word. In die verte is die mis donkerder en dreigender en amper pikswart. Meneer Wonka stoot die deure oop. “Staan terug,” sê hy. “Moenie uitval nie, Charlie! Versigtig!”
Die mis kom by die hyser in. Dit ruik nat en muwwerig soos ’n ondergrondse kerker. Die stilte is oorweldigend. Daar is geen geluid nie, nie die wind wat fluister nie, geen mens of insek se stem nie, en dit laat Charlie op
’n vreemde manier bang voel om daar in die middel van
hierdie grys onmenslike niksheid te staan - asof hy in
’n heeltemal ander wêreld is, op ’n plek waar ’n mens behoort weg te bly.
“Minusland!” fluister meneer Wonka. “Ons is hier, Charlie! Nou is die probleem net om haar te kry. Ons is dalk gelukkig … maar aan die ander kant, dalk nie!”

Rescue in Minusland

‘I don’t like it here at all,’ Charlie whispered. ‘It gives me the willies.’

‘Me, too,’ Mr Wonka whispered back. ‘But we’ve got a job to do, Charlie, and we must go through with it.’

The mist was condensing now on the glass walls of the Elevator making it difficult to see out except through the open doors.

‘Do any other creatures live here, Mr Wonka?’

‘Plenty of Gnoolies.’

‘Are they dangerous?’

‘If they bite you, they are. You’re a gonner, my boy, if you’re bitten by a Gnooly.’

The Elevator drifted on, rocking gently from side to side. The grey-black oily fog swirled around them.

‘What does a Gnooly look like, Mr Wonka?’

‘They don’t look like anything, Charlie. They can’t.’

'You mean you've never seen one?'

'You can't see Gnoolies, my boy. You can't even feel them … until they puncture your skin … then it's too late. They've got you.'

'You mean … there might be swarms of them all around us this very moment?' Charlie asked.

'There might,' said Mr Wonka.

Charlie felt his skin beginning to creep. 'Do you die at once?' he asked.

'First you become subtracted … a little later you are divided … but very slowly … it takes a long time … it's long division and it's very painful. After that, you become one of them.'

'Couldn't we shut the door?' Charlie asked.

'I'm afraid not, my boy. We'd never see her through the glass. There's too much mist and moisture. She's not going to be easy to pick out anyway.'

Charlie stood at the open door of the Elevator and stared into the swirling vapours. This, he thought, is what hell must be like … hell without heat … there was something unholy about it all, something unbelievably diabolical … It was all so deathly quiet, so desolate and empty … At the same time, the constant movement, the twisting and swirling of the misty vapours, gave one the feeling that some very powerful force, evil and malignant, was at work all around … Charlie felt a jab on his arm! He jumped! He almost jumped out of the Elevator! 'Sorry,' said Mr Wonka. 'It's only me.'

'Oh-h-h!' Charlie gasped. 'For a second, I thought …'

'I know what you thought, Charlie … And by the way, I'm awfully glad you're with me. How would you like to come here alone … as I did … as I had to … many times?'

'I wouldn't,' said Charlie.

'There she is!' said Mr Wonka, pointing. 'No, she isn't! … Oh, dear! I could have sworn I saw her for a moment right over there on the edge

of that dark patch. Keep watching, Charlie.'

'There!' said Charlie. 'Over there. Look!'

'Where?' said Mr Wonka. 'Point to her, Charlie!'

'She's … she's gone again. She sort of faded away,' Charlie said.

They stood at the open door of the Elevator, peering into the swirly grey vapours.

'There! Quick! Right there!' Charlie cried. 'Can't you see her?'

'Yes, Charlie! I see her! I'm moving up close now!'

Mr Wonka reached behind him and began touching a number of buttons.

'Grandma!' Charlie cried out. 'We've come to get you, Grandma!'

They could see her faintly through the mist, but oh so faintly. And they could see the mist through her as well. She was transparent. She was hardly there at all. She was no more than a shadow. They could see her face and just the faintest outline of her body swathed in a sort of gown. But she wasn't upright. She was floating lengthwise in the swirling vapour.

'Why is she lying down?' Charlie whispered.

'Because she's a Minus, Charlie. Surely you know what a minus looks like … Like that …' Mr Wonka drew a horizontal line in the air with his finger.

The Elevator glided close. The ghostly shadow of Grandma Georgina's face was no more than a yard away now. Charlie reached out through the door to touch her but there was nothing there to touch. His hand went right through her skin. 'Grandma!' he gasped. She began to drift away.

'Stand back!' ordered Mr Wonka, and suddenly, from some secret place inside his coat-tails he whisked out a spray-gun. It was one of those old-fashioned things people used to use for spraying fly-spray around the room before aerosols came along. He aimed the spray-gun straight at the shadow of Grandma Georgina and he pumped the

handle hard ONCE … TWICE … THREE TIMES! Each time, a fine black spray spurted out from the nozzle of the gun. Instantly, Grandma Georgina disappeared.

‘A bull’s eye!’ cried Mr Wonka, jumping up and down with excitement. ‘I got her with both barrels! I plussed her good and proper! That’s Vita-Wonk for you!’

‘Where’s she gone?’ Charlie asked.

‘Back where she came from, of course! To the factory! She’s a Minus no longer, my boy! She’s a one hundred per cent red-blooded Plus! Come along now! Let’s get out of here quickly before the Gnoolies find us!’ Mr Wonka jabbed a button. The doors closed and the Great Glass Elevator shot upwards for home.

‘Sit down and strap yourself in again, Charlie!’ said Mr Wonka. ‘We’re going flat out this time!’

The Elevator roared and rocketed up toward the surface of the Earth. Mr Wonka and Charlie sat side by side on their little jump-seats, strapped in tight. Mr Wonka started tucking the spray-gun back into that enormous pocket somewhere in his coat-tails. ‘It’s such a pity one has to use a clumsy old thing like this,’ he said. ‘But there’s simply no other way of doing it. Ideally, of course, one would measure out exactly the right number of drops into a teaspoon and feed it carefully into the mouth. But it’s impossible to feed anything into a Minus. It’s like trying to feed one’s own shadow. That’s why I’ve got to use a spray-gun. Spray ‘em all over, my boy! That’s the only way!’

‘It worked fine, though, didn’t it?’ Charlie said.

‘Oh, it worked all right, Charlie! It worked beautifully! All I’m saying is that there’s bound to be a slight overdose …’

‘I don’t quite know what you mean, Mr Wonka.’

‘My dear boy, if it only takes four drops of Vita-Wonk to turn a young Oompa-Loompa into an old man …’ Mr Wonka lifted his hands and let them fall limply on to his lap.

‘You mean Grandma may have got too much?’ asked Charlie, turning slightly pale.

'I'm afraid that's putting it rather mildly,' said Mr Wonka.

'But … but why did you give her such a lot of it, then?' said Charlie, getting more and more worried. 'Why did you spray her three times? She must have got pints and pints of it!'

'Gallons!' cried Mr Wonka, slapping his thighs. 'Gallons and gallons! But don't let a little thing like that bother you, my dear Charlie! The important part of it is we've got her back! She's a Minus no longer! She's a lovely Plus!

'She's as plussy as plussy can be!

She's more plussy than you or than me!

The question is how,

Just how old is she now?

Is she more than a hundred and three?'

Redding in Minusland

"Ek hou nie van hierdie plek nie," fluister Charlie. "Dit gee my die rillings."
"Vir my ook," fluister meneer Wonka terug. "Maar ons het werk om hier te doen, Charlie, en ons moet daarmee deurdruk."
Die mis kondenseer nou teen die Groot Glashyser se glasmure en maak dit moeilik om buitentoe te sien, behalwe deur die oop deure.
"Bly daar enige ander wesens hier, meneer Wonka?"
"'n Hele horde Gnoelies." "Is hulle gevaarlik?"
"As hulle jou byt, is hulle. As 'n Gnoelie jou byt, ou seun, is dit verby met jou."
Die hyser dryf verder en wieg sag heen en weer. Die
grysswart, olierige mis warrel om hulle. "Hoe lyk 'n Gnoelie, meneer Wonka?"
"Hulle lyk na niks nie, Charlie. Hulle kan nie." "Jy bedoel jy het nog nooit een gesien nie?"
"Mens kan Gnoelies nie sien nie, my seun. Jy kan hulle nie eens voel nie … totdat hulle jou vel prik … dan is dit te laat. Dan het hulle jou."
"Jy bedoel … daar is op hierdie oomblik dalk swerms
van hulle hier oral om ons?" vra Charlie.
"Moontlik," sê meneer Wonka.
Charlie voel hoe hy hoendervleis raak. "Gaan mens dadelik dood?" vra

hy.
“Jy word eers afgetrek… ’n rukkie later word jy gedeel…
maar baie stadig … dit neem nogal lank … dis langdeling en dis baie pynlik. Daarna word jy een van hulle.”
“Kan ons nie die deur toemaak nie?”
“Ek is bevrees nie, ou seun. Ons sal haar nooit deur die glas sien nie. Daar is te veel mis en klammigheid. Dit gaan in elk geval nie maklik wees om haar raak te sien
me. yi
Charlie staan by die hyser se oop deur en staar na die malende misslierte. Dit, dink hy, is seker hoe die hel is
… die hel sonder hitte … Daar is iets onheiligs aan dit alles, iets ongelooflik duiwels … Dit is so doodstil hier, so verlate en leeg … Terselfdertyd gee die aanhoudende beweging, die misdampe wat so krul en kolk, jou die gevoel van ’n baie magtige krag, iets boos en venynigs, wat hier oral teenwoordig is … lets pluk aan Charlie se
arm. Hy wip van die skrik. Hy spring amper by die hyser
uit! “Ekskuus,” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis net ek.”
“Oo-o-o!” snak Charlie. “Ek het vir ’n oomblik gedink
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“Ek weet wat jy gedink het, Charlie … En terloops, ek is baie bly jy’s by my. Hoe sou jy daarvan gehou het om alleen hierheen te kom … soos ek het… soos ek moes … al baie keer?”
“Ek sou nie kon nie,” sê Charlie.
“Daar is sy!” sê meneer Wonka en wys met sy vinger. “Nee, dis nie sy nie … O, genugtig! Ek kon sweer ek sien haar vir ’n oomblik net mooi daar langs daardie donker kol. Hou aan kyk, Charlie.”
“Daar!” sê Charlie. “Daar’s sy. Kyk!”
“Waar?” vra meneer Wonka. “Wys my waar, Charlie!” “Sy … sy’s nou weer weg. Sy’t sommer net verdwyn,” sê Charlie.
Hulle staan in die hyser se oop deur en tuur by die
malende grys slierte in.
“Daar! Gou! Net daar!” roep Charlie uit. “Kan jy haar
sienI
“Ja, Charlie! Ek sien haar! Ek gaan nou nader beweeg.” Meneer Wonka draai om en begin ’n paar knoppies
druk.
“Ouma!” roep Charlie uit. “Ons het Ouma kom haal!”
Hulle sien haar vaagweg deur die mis, maar net
baie dof. En hulle kan die mis deur haar ook sien. Sy is deurskynend. Sy is skaars daar. Sy is niks meer as ’n skaduwee nie. Hulle sien haar gesig en net die dowwe buitelyne van haar liggaam, wat in ’n soort kleed toegedraai is. Sy lê op haar rug en dryf in die misnewels.

“Hoekom lê sy dan?” fluister Charlie.
“Want sy’s ’n Minus, Charlie. Jy weet tog sekerlik hoe lyk ’n minus… Só…” Meneer Wonka teken ’n horisontale strepie in die lug met sy vinger.
Die hyser gly nader. Die spokerige skaduwee van ouma
Georgina se gesig is nou niks meer as ’n tree weg nie. Charlie reik by die deur uit om aan haar te raak, maar daar is niks om aan te vat nie. Sy hand gaan deur haar vel. “Ouma!” snakhy. Sy begin wegdryf.
“Staan weg!” beveel meneer Wonka en skielik pluk hy ’n
spuitpomp vanuit ’n geheime plek in sy swaelstertbaadjie. Dit is een van daardie outydse goed wat mense gebruik
het om vlieëgif in ’n vertrek te spuit in die due voor diiftf spuitkannetjies was. Hy mik met die spuitpomp result na ouma Georgina se skaduwee en pomp hard EEN …. TWEE … DRIE KEER! Elke keer kom daar ’n fyn swart sproei voor by die spuitkop uit. Ouma Georgina verdwyn oombliklik.
“Kolskoot!” gil meneer Wonka en spring op en af van opgewondenheid. “Ek het haar deeglik bygekom! Ek het haar ordentlik geplus! Dis Wonka-Oua vir jou!”
“Waarheen is sy?” vra Charlie.
“Terug na waar sy vandaan gekom het, natuurlik! Fabriek toe! Sy’s nie meer ’n Minus nie, ou seun. Sy’s ’n eenhonderd persent volbloed Plus! Kom, laat ons hier padgee voor die Gnoelies ons kry!” Meneer Wonka druk hard op ’n knoppie. Die deure gaan toe en die Groot Glashyser skiet boontoe, terug huis toe.
“Kom sit en gordel jou weer vas, Charlie!” sê meneer
Wonka. “Ons vlieg hierdie keer volspoed!”
Die hyser brul en skiet op na die Aarde se oppervlak. Meneer Wonka en Charlie sit langs mekaar op hulle klein afklapstoeltjies, stewig vasgegord. Meneer Wonka druk die spuitpomp terug in daardie enorme sak iewers in sy swaelstertbaadjie. “Dis regtig jammer mens moet so
’n lomp ou ding soos dié gebruik,” sê hy. “Maar daar is eenvoudig geen ander manier om dit te doen nie. Ideaal gesproke behoort jy natuurlik die regte getal druppels in
’n teelepel af te meet en dit versigtig in die persoon se mond te drup. Maar dis onmoontlik om vir ’n Minus enigiets te voer. Dis soos om jou eie skaduwee te voer. Dis hoekom ek ’n spuitpomp moet gebruik. Sproei hulle sommer oraloor, ou seun! Dis al manier!”
“Dit het goed genoeg gewerk, of hoe?” sê Charlie.
“O ja, dit het goed gewerk, Charlie. Dit het uitstekend gewerk! Al wat ek probeer sê, is sy het dalk ’n effense oordosis ingekry…”
“Ek verstaan nie mooi wat jy bedoel nie, meneer
Wonka.”

“My liewe seun, as dit net vier druppels Wonka-Oua vat om ’n jong Oempa-Loempa in ’n ou man te verander ...” Meneer Wonka lig sy hande en laat val hulle slap in sy skoot.
“Jy bedoel Ouma het dalk te veel ingekry?” vra Charlie en word effens bleek.
“Ek’s bevrees dis taamlik sagkens gestel,” sê meneer
Wonka.
“Maar… maar hoekom het jy dan vir haar soveel gegee?” vra Charlie, wat al hoe meer en meer bekommerd raak. “Hoekom het jy haar drie keer gespuit? Sy moes te veel daarvan ingekry het!”
“Gans te veel!” skree meneer Wonka en slaan teen
sy bobene. “Hopeloos te veel! Maar moenie dat só
’n kleinigheidjie jou pla nie, my liewe Charlie! Die belangrikste van alles is, ons het haar teruggekry! Sy’s nie meer ’n Minus nie! Sy’s ’n pragtige plus!

“Sy’s so plus soos wat plus kan wees, Meer plus as wat ons ooit kan wees! Die vraag is net nou:
Hoe oud is sy nou?
Sal sy meer as ’n honderd-en-drie wees?”

The Oldest Person in the World

‘We return in triumph, Charlie!’ cried Mr Wonka as the Great Glass Elevator began to slow down. ‘Once more your dear family will all be together again!’

The Elevator stopped. The doors slid open. And there was the Chocolate Room and the chocolate river and the Oompa-Loompas and in the middle of it all the great bed belonging to the old grandparents. ‘Charlie!’ said Grandpa Joe, rushing forward. ‘Thank heavens you’re back!’ Charlie hugged him. Then he hugged his mother and his father. ‘Is she here?’ he said. ‘Grandma Georgina?’

Nobody answered. Nobody did anything except Grandpa Joe, who pointed to the bed. He pointed but he didn’t look where he was pointing. None of them looked at the bed — except Charlie. He walked past them all to get a better view, and he saw at one end the two babies, Grandma Josephine and Grandpa George, both tucked in and sleeping peacefully. At the other end ...

‘Don’t be alarmed,’ said Mr Wonka, running up and placing a hand on Charlie’s arm. ‘She’s bound to be just a teeny bit over-plussed. I warned you about that.’

‘What have you done to her?’ cried Mrs Bucket. ‘My poor old mother!’

Propped up against the pillows at the other end of the bed was the most extraordinary-looking thing Charlie had ever seen! Was it some ancient fossil? It couldn’t be that because it was moving slightly! And now it was making sounds! Croaking sounds — the kind of sounds a very old frog might make if it knew a few words. ‘Well, well, well,’ it croaked. ‘If it isn’t dear Charlie.’

‘Grandma!’ cried Charlie. ‘Grandma Georgina! Oh … Oh … Oh!’

Her tiny face was like a pickled walnut. There were such masses of creases and wrinkles that the mouth and eyes and even the nose were sunken almost out of sight. Her hair was pure white and her hands, which were resting on top of the blanket, were just little lumps of wrinkly skin.

The presence of this ancient creature seemed to have terrified not only Mr and Mrs Bucket, but Grandpa Joe as well. They stood well back, away from the bed. Mr Wonka, on the other hand, was as happy as ever. ‘My dear lady!’ he cried, advancing to the edge of the bed and clasping one of those tiny wrinkled hands in both of his. ‘Welcome home! And how are you feeling on this bright and glorious day?’

‘Not too bad,’ croaked Grandma Georgina. ‘Not too bad at all … considering my age.’

‘Good for you!’ said Mr Wonka. ‘Atta girl! All we’ve got to do now is find out exactly how old you are! Then we shall be able to take further action!’

‘You’re taking no further action around here,’ said Mrs Bucket, tight-lipped. ‘You’ve done enough damage already!’

‘But my dear old muddleheaded mugwump,’ said Mr Wonka, turning to Mrs Bucket. ‘What does it matter that the old girl has become a trifle too old? We can put that right in a jiffy! Have you forgotten Wonka-Vite and how every tablet makes you twenty years younger? We shall bring her back! We shall transform her into a blossoming blushing maiden in the twink of an eye!’

‘What good is that when her husband’s not even out of his nappies yet?’ wailed Mrs Bucket, pointing a finger at the one-year-old Grandpa

George, so peacefully sleeping.

'Madam,' said Mr Wonka, 'let us do one thing at a time ...'

'I forbid you to give her that beastly Wonka-Vite!' said Mrs Bucket. 'You'll turn her into a Minus again just as sure as I'm standing here!'

'I don't want to be a Minus!' croaked Grandma Georgina. 'If I ever have to go back to that beastly Minusland again, the Gnoolies will knickle me!'

'Fear not!' said Mr Wonka. 'This time I myself will supervise the giving of the medicine. I shall personally see to it that you get the correct dosage. But listen very carefully now! I cannot work out how many pills to give you until I know exactly how old you are! That's obvious, isn't it?'

'It is not obvious at all,' said Mrs Bucket. 'Why can't you give her one pill at a time and play it safe?'

'Impossible, madam. In very serious cases such as this one, Wonka-Vite doesn't work at all when given in small doses. You've got to throw everything at her in one go. You've got to hit her with it hard. A single pill wouldn't even begin to shift her. She's too far gone for that. It's all or nothing.'

'No,' said Mrs Bucket firmly.

'Yes,' said Mr Wonka. 'Dear lady, please listen to me. If you have a very severe headache and you need three aspirins to cure it, it's no good taking only one at a time and waiting four hours between each. You'll never cure yourself that way. You've got to gulp them all down in one go. It's the same with Wonka-Vite. May I proceed?'

'Oh, all right, I suppose you'll have to,' said Mrs Bucket.

'Good,' said Mr Wonka, giving a little jump and twirling his feet in the air. 'Now then, how old are you, my dear Grandma Georgina?'

'I don't know,' she croaked. 'I lost count of that years and years ago.'

'Don't you have any idea?' said Mr Wonka.

'Of course I don't,' gibbered the old woman. 'Nor would you if you

were as old as I am.'

'Think!' said Mr Wonka. 'You've got to think!'

The tiny old wrinkled brown walnut face wrinkled itself up more than ever. The others stood waiting. The Oompa-Loompas, enthralled by the sight of this ancient object, were all edging closer and closer to the bed. The two babies slept on.

'Are you, for example, a hundred?' said Mr Wonka. 'Or a hundred and ten? Or a hundred and twenty?'

'It's no good,' she croaked. 'I never did have a head for numbers.'

'This is a catastrophe!' cried Mr Wonka. 'If you can't tell me how old you are, I can't help you! I dare not risk an overdose!'

Gloom settled upon the entire company, including for once Mr Wonka himself. 'You've messed it up good and proper this time, haven't you?' said Mrs Bucket.

'Grandma,' Charlie said, moving forward to the bed. 'Listen, Grandma. Don't worry about exactly how old you might be. Try to think of a happening instead … think of something that happened to you … anything you like … as far back as you can … it may help us …'

'Lots of things happened to me, Charlie … so many many things happened to me …'

'But can you remember any of them, Grandma?'

'Oh, I don't know, my darling … I suppose I could remember one or two if I thought hard enough …'

'Good, Grandma, good!' said Charlie eagerly. 'Now what is the very earliest thing you can remember in your whole life?'

'Oh, my dear boy, that really would be going back a few years, wouldn't it?'

'When you were little, Grandma, like me. Can't you remember anything you did when you were little?'

The tiny sunken black eyes glimmered faintly and a sort of smile

touched the corners of the almost invisible little slit of a mouth. 'There was a ship,' she said. 'I can remember a ship … I couldn't ever forget that ship …'

'Go on, Grandma! A ship! What sort of a ship? Did you sail on her?'

'Of course I sailed on her, my darling … we all sailed on her …'

'Where from? Where to?' Charlie went on eagerly.

'Oh no, I couldn't tell you that … I was just a tiny little girl …' She lay back on the pillow and closed her eyes. Charlie watched her, waiting for something more. Everybody waited. No one moved.

'… It had a lovely name, that ship … there was something beautiful … something so beautiful about that name … but of course I couldn't possibly remember it …'

Charlie, who had been sitting on the edge of the bed, suddenly jumped up. His face was shining with excitement. 'If I said the name, Grandma, would you remember it then?'

'I might, Charlie … yes … I think I might …'

'THE MAYFLOWER!' cried Charlie.

The old woman's head jerked up off the pillow. 'That's it!' she croaked. 'You've got it, Charlie! The Mayflower … Such a lovely name …'

'Grandpa!' Charlie called out, dancing with excitement. 'What year did the Mayflower sail for America?'

'The Mayflower sailed out of Plymouth Harbour on September the sixth, sixteen hundred and twenty,' said Grandpa Joe.

'Plymouth …' croaked the old woman. 'That rings a bell, too … Yes, it might easily have been Plymouth …'

'Sixteen hundred and twenty!' cried Charlie. 'Oh, my heavens above! That means you're … you do it, Grandpa!'

'Well now,' said Grandpa Joe. 'Take sixteen hundred and twenty away from nineteen hundred and seventy-two … that leaves … don't rush

me now, Charlie … That leaves three hundred … and … and fifty-two.'

'Jumping jackrabbits!' yelled Mr Bucket. 'She's three hundred and fifty-two years old!'

'She's more,' said Charlie. 'How old did you say you were, Grandma, when you sailed on the Mayflower? Were you about eight?'

'I think I was even younger than that, my darling … I was only a bitty little girl … probably no more than six …'

'Then she's three hundred and fifty-eight!' gasped Charlie.

'That's Vita-Wonk for you,' said Mr Wonka proudly. 'I told you it was powerful stuff.'

'Three hundred and fifty-eight!' said Mr Bucket. 'It's unbelievable!'

'Just imagine the things she must have seen in her lifetime!' said Grandpa Joe.

'My poor old mother!' wailed Mrs Bucket. 'What on earth …'

'Patience, dear lady,' said Mr Wonka. 'Now comes the interesting part. Bring on the Wonka-Vite!'

An Oompa-Loompa ran forward with a large bottle and gave it to Mr Wonka. He put it on the bed. 'How young does she want to be?' he asked.

'Seventy-eight,' said Mrs Bucket firmly. 'Exactly where she was before all this nonsense started!'

'Surely she'd like to be a bit younger than that?' said Mr Wonka.

'Certainly not!' said Mrs Bucket. 'It's too risky!'

'Too risky, too risky!' croaked Grandma Georgina. 'You'll only Minus me again if you try to be clever!'

'Have it your own way,' said Mr Wonka. 'Now then, I've got to do a few sums.' Another Oompa-Loompa trotted forward, holding up a blackboard. Mr Wonka took a piece of chalk from his pocket and

wrote:

'Fourteen pills of Wonka-Vite exactly,' said Mr Wonka. The Oompa-Loompa took the blackboard away. Mr Wonka picked up the bottle from the bed and opened it and counted out fourteen of the little brilliant yellow pills. 'Water!' he said. Yet another Oompa-Loompa ran forward with a glass of water. Mr Wonka tipped all fourteen pills into the glass. The water bubbled and frothed. 'Drink it while it's fizzing,' he said, holding the glass up to Grandma Georgina's lips. 'All in one gulp!'

She drank it.

Mr Wonka sprang back and took a large brass clock from his pocket. 'Don't forget,' he cried, 'it's a year a second! She's got two hundred and eighty years to lose! That'll take her four minutes and forty seconds! Watch the centuries fall away!'

The room was so silent they could hear the ticking of Mr Wonka's clock. At first nothing much happened to the ancient person lying on the bed. She closed her eyes and lay back. Now and again, the puckered skin of her face gave a twitch and her little hands jerked up and down, but that was all …

'One minute gone!' called Mr Wonka. 'She's sixty years younger.'

'She looks just the same to me,' said Mr Bucket.

'Of course she does,' said Mr Wonka. 'What's a mere sixty years when you're over three hundred to start with!'

'Are you all right, Mother?' said Mrs Bucket anxiously. 'Talk to me, Mother!'

'Two minutes gone!' called Mr Wonka. 'She's one hundred and twenty years younger!'

And now definite changes were beginning to show in the old woman's face. The skin was quivering all over and some of the deepest wrinkles were becoming less and less deep, the mouth less sunken, the nose more prominent.

'Mother!' cried Mrs Bucket. 'Are you all right? Speak to me, Mother, please!'

Suddenly, with a suddenness that made everyone jump, the old woman sat bolt upright in bed and shouted, 'Did you hear the news! Admiral Nelson has beaten the French at Trafalgar!'

'She's going crazy!' said Mr Bucket.

'Not at all,' said Mr Wonka. 'She's going through the nineteenth century.'

'Three minutes gone!' said Mr Wonka.

Every second now she was growing slightly less and less shrivelled, becoming more and more lively. It was a marvellous thing to watch.

'Gettysburg!' she cried. 'General Lee is on the run!'

And a few seconds later she let out a great wail of anguish and said, 'He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!'

'Who's dead?' said Mr Bucket, craning forward.

'Lincoln!' she wailed. 'There goes the train …'

'She must have seen it!' said Charlie. 'She must have been there!'

'She is there,' said Mr Wonka. 'At least she was a few seconds ago.'

'Will someone please explain to me,' said Mrs Bucket, 'what on earth …'

'Four minutes gone!' said Mr Wonka. 'Only forty seconds left! Only forty more years to lose!'

'Grandma!' cried Charlie, running forward. 'You're looking almost exactly like you used to! Oh, I'm so glad!'

'Just as long as it all stops when it's meant to,' said Mrs Bucket.

'I'll bet it doesn't,' said Mr Bucket. 'Something always goes wrong.'

'Not when I'm in charge of it, sir,' said Mr Wonka. 'Time's up! She is now seventy-eight years old! How do you feel, dear lady? Is everything all right?'

'I feel tolerable,' she said. 'Just tolerable. But that's no thanks to you, you meddling old mackerel!'

There she was again, the same cantankerous grumbling old Grandma Georgina that Charlie had known so well before it all started. Mrs Bucket flung her arms around her and began weeping with joy. The old woman pushed her aside and said, 'What, may I ask, are those two silly babies doing at the other end of the bed?'

'One of them's your husband,' said Mr Bucket.

'Rubbish!' she said. 'Where is George?'

'I'm afraid it's true, Mother,' said Mrs Bucket. 'That's him on the left. The other one's Josephine …'

'You … you chiselling old cheeseburger!' she shouted, pointing a fierce finger at Mr Wonka. 'What in the name of …'

'Now now now now now!' said Mr Wonka. 'Let us not for mercy's sake have another row so late in the day. If everyone will keep their hair on and leave this to Charlie and me, we shall have them exactly where they used to be in the flick of a fly's wing!'

Die oudste mens in die wêreld

"Ons keer triomfantelik terug, Charlie!" roep meneer Wonka uit wanneer die Groot Glashyser begin spoed verminder. "Jou geliefde familie sal weer herenig wees!"
Die hyser kom tot stilstand. Die deure gly oop. En daar is die Sjokoladesaal en die sjokoladerivier en die Oempa-Loempas en in die middel van dit alles die oumense se groot bed. "Charlie!" roep oupa Joe uit en hardloop nader. "Dank die hemel jy's terug!" Charlie gee sy oupa
'n drukkie. En dan sy ma en sy pa. "Is sy hier?" vra hy.
"Ouma Georgina?"
Niemand antwoord nie. Niemand doen enigiets nie. Behalwe oupa Joe. Hy beduie na die bed. Hy wys, maar hy kyk nie soontoe nie. Niemand kyk na die bed nie
- behalwe Charlie. Hy loop verby almal om beter te kan sien. Aan die een kant van die bed sien hy die twee babas, ouma Josephine en oupa George, wat albei warm toegemaak lê en salig slaap. Aan die ander kant…

“Moenie skrik nie,” sê meneer Wonka. Hy kom vinnig
nader en sit sy hand op Charlie se arm. “Sy’s maar net ’n klein-klein bietjie oorplus. Ek het jou mos gewaarsku.”
“Wat het jy met haar gedoen?” gil mevrou Bucket. “My
arme ou moeder!”
Opgeprop teen die kussings aan die ander kant van die bed is daar die vreemdste wese wat Charlie nog ooit gesien het! Is dit een of ander oeroue fossiel? Kan nie wees nie, want dit beweeg effens. En nou maak dit geluide! Hees, skor geluide - die soort geluide wat
’n baie ou padda dalk sal maak as hy ’n paar woorde ken. “Wei, wel, wel,” kwaak dit. “Dis mos liewe klein Charlie.”
“Ouma!” gil Charlie. “Ouma Georgina! O … Oo … Ooo!”
Haar verrimpelde gesiggie lyk soos ’n gepekelde okkerneut. Dis só vol plooie en voue dat die mond en oë en selfs die neus amper heeltemal weggesink is en mens dit skaars kan sien. Haar hare is spierwit en haar hande wat op die kombers lê, is net klein hopies opgefrommelde vel. Hierdie antieke wese se teenwoordigheid ontstel nie net vir meneer en mevrou Bucket nie, maar ook vir oupa Joe. Hulle staan weg, op
’n veilige afstand van die bed af. Maar meneer Wonka lyk so vrolik soos altyd. “My dierbare dame!” roep hy uit, kom tot by die kant van die bed en gryp een van daardie verrimpelde handjies in albei syne vas. “Welkom tuis! En hoe voel u op hierdie heuglike en sonnige dag?”
“Nie te sleg nie,” sê ouma Georgina skor. “Glad nie te
sleg nie … my ouderdom in ag genome.”
“Mooi so!” sê meneer Wonka. “Dis my meisie. Al wat ons nou moet doen, is om uit te vind presies hoe oud jy is! Dan sal ons tot verdere aksie kan oorgaan!”
“Jy gaan nie tot enige verdere aksie oor nie!” sê mevrou
Bucket met stywe lippe. “Jy’t al klaar genoeg skade aangerig!”

“Maar my liewe warkop wat so dwarsskop,” sê meneer Wonka en draai na mevrou Bucket. “Wat maak dit saak as die ou tante ’n tikkie te oud geword het? Ons kan dit mos tjoef-tjaf regstel! Het jy vergeet van Wonka-Jonka en hoe elke pil jou twintig jaar jonger maak? Ons sal haar terugbring. Ons sal haar binne ’n oogwenk in ’n blosende, bloesende jong meisie verander!”
“Wat help dit as haar man nog nie eers uit sy doeke is
nie?” weeklaag mevrou Bucket en wys met haar vinger na die eenjarige oupa George wat so salig slaap.
“Mevrou,” sê meneer Wonka, “kom ons doen een ding
op ’n slag …”
“Ek verbied jou om vir haar van daardie aaklige Wonka-Jonka te gee!”

sê meneer Bucket. "Jy sal haar weer in 'n Minus verander, sowaar soos wat ek hier staan!"
"Ek wil nie 'n Minus wees nie," kwaak ouma Georgina. "As ek ooit weer terug na daai liederlike Minusland toe moet gaan, sal die Gnoelies my gnielie!"
"Wees nie bevrees nie!" sê meneer Wonka. "Hierdie
keer sal ek self toesig hou oor die toediening van die medisyne! Ek sal persoonlik seker maak dat u die korrekte dosis kry. Maar luister nou eers baie mooi. Ek kan nie uitwerk hoeveel pille om vir u te gee voor ek nie weet presies hoe oud u is nie! Dis vanselfsprekend, dan nie?"
"Dis glad nie vanselfsprekend nie," sê mevrou Bucket. "Hoekom kan jy nie veilig speel en vir haar net een pil op 'n slag gee nie?"
"Dis onmoontlik, Mevrou. In baie ernstige gevalle soos hierdie een werk Wonka-Jonka glad nie wanneer dit in klein dosisse toegedoen word nie. Sy moet alles gelyktydig inkry. Dit moet haar met 'n slag tref. Een pil op sy eie sal niks help nie. Sy is te ver heen daarvoor. Dis alles of niks."
"Nee," sê mevrou Bucket streng.
"Ja," sê meneer Wonka. "Liewe dame, luister asseblief na my. As jy 'n hewige hoofpyn het en drie aspiriene nodig het, help dit mos nie om net een op 'n slag te drink en vier uur te wag voor jy die volgende een drink nie. Jou hoofpyn sal nooit só weggaan nie. Jy moet al die pille saam drink. En dis dieselfde met Wonka-Jonka. Mag ek voortgaan?"
"Nou goed dan, ek veronderstel jy moet seker maar,"
sê mevrou Bucket.
"Reg," sê meneer Wonka. Hy gee 'n sprongetjie en wikkel sy voete in die lug. "Nou toe, hoe oud is u, my liewe ouma Georgina?"
"Ek weet nie," sê haar krakerige stem. "Ek het jare en jare gelede al opgehou tel."
"Het u geen benul nie?" vra meneer Wonka.
"Natuurlik nie," brabbel die ou vrou. "Jy sou ook nie gehad het as jy so oud soos ek was nie." "Dink!" sê meneer Wonka. "Dink mooi!"
Die verrimpelde ou bruin okkerneutgesiggie verfrommel selfs nog meer. Die ander staan en wag. Die Oempa-Loempas, gefassineer deur hierdie antieke voorwerp, beweeg al nader en nader aan die bed. Die twee babas slaap rustig aan.
"Is u byvoorbeeld honderd?" vra meneer Wonka. "Of
honderd en een? Of honderd en twintig?"
"Dis hopeloos," krys sy. "Ek was nooit goed met getalle me.
"Dis 'n katastrofe!" roep meneer Wonka uit. "As u nie
vir my kan sê hoe oud u is nie kan ek u nie help nie! Ek kan dit nie waag om u 'n oordosis te gee nie!"
Almal om die bed word wanhopig, en vir die eerste keer
meneer Wonka self ook. "Jy't hierdie keer alles totaal en al

opgemors," sê mevrou Bucket.
"Ouma," sê Charlie en beweeg nader aan die bed.
"Luister, Ouma. Moenie probeer dink presies hoe oud Ouma nou is nie. Probeer liewer dink aan iets wat gebeur het… dink aan iets wat met Ouma gebeur het… enigiets wat vir Ouma lekker was … so lank gelede as moontlik … Dit kan ons dalk help …"
"Daar het baie dinge met my gebeur, Charlie … So baie,
baie dinge het met my gebeur …"
"Maar kan Ouma enige van hulle onthou?"
"O, ek weet nie, my skat … Ek sal seker een of twee dinge kan onthou as ek hard genoeg dink…"
"Mooi, Ouma, mooi!" sê Charlie gretig. "Wat is die heel eerste ding wat Ouma in Ouma se hele lewe kan onthou?"
"O, my liewe seun, dit sal 'n hele klompie jaar gelede wees, 'n aardige klompie."
"Toe Ouma so oud soos ekwas. Kan Ouma iets onthou
wat Ouma gedoen het toe Ouma nog só jonk was?"
Die weggesakte swart ogies glinster dofweg en daar kom
'n effense glimlag om die amper onsigbare mondhoeke. "Daar was 'n skip," sê sy. "Ek onthou 'n skip … Ek sal daai skip nooit vergeet nie …"
"Gaan aan, Ouma! 'n Skip! Watter soort skip? Was
Ouma op die skip?"
"Natuurlik was ek daarop, my skat … Ons was almal daarop …"
"Waarvandaan? Waarnatoe?" gaan Charlie gretig aan.
"O nee, ek sal nie kan sê nie … Ek was maar net 'n
klein ou dogtertjie …" Sy lê terug teen die kussing en maak haar oë toe. Charlie hou haar dop en wag vir nog iets. Almal wag. Niemand beweeg nie.
" … Hy't 'n lieflike naam gehad, daardie skip… Daar was
iets moois … iets baie moois aan daardie naam … maar ek sal dit natuurlik onmoontlik nie kan onthou nie …"
Charlie wat op die bed se rand gesit het, spring skielik
op. Sy gesig blink van opgewondenheid. "As ek die naam sê, sal Ouma dit dan onthou?"
"Ek mag dalk, Charlie … ja … ek dink ek mag dalk…" "DIE MAYFLOWER!" roep Charlie uit.
Die ou vrou se kop ruk van die kussing af op. "Dis reg!" snak sy. "Jy's reg, Charlie! Die Mayflower … So 'n lieflike naam …"
"Oupa!" vra Charlie en dans opgewonde rond. "In watter jaar het die Mayflower Amerika toe geseil?"
"Die Mayflower het op die sesde September, sestienhonderd en twintig uit Plymouth se hawe weggeseil," sê oupa Joe.
"Plymouth …" kwaak die ou vrou. "Dit lui 'n klokkie …

Ja, dit was dalk Plymouth …”
“Sestien twintig!” gil Charlie. “Goeie genugtig! Dit beteken Ouma is … Doen Oupa die som!”
“Nou goed,” sê oupa Joe. “Trek sestienhonderd en
twintig af van negentienhonderd twee-en-sewentig … en die antwoord is … Moenie my aanjaag nie, Charlie … Die antwoord is driehonderd … twee-en-vyftig.”
“Springende sprinkane!” gil meneer Bucket. “Sy’s driehonderd twee-en-vyftig jaar oud!”
“Nee, ouer,” sê Charlie. “Hoe oud het Ouma gesê
was Ouma toe Ouma op die Mayflower was? Was Ouma omtrent agt?”
“Ek dink ek was selfs nog jonger as dit, my skat … Ek
was net ’n klein-klein dogtertjie … Seker nie meer as ses me…
“Dan is sy driehonderd agt-en-vyftigl” snak Charlie.
“Dis Wonka-Oua vir jou,” sê meneer Wonka trots. “Ek het mos gesê dis sterk goed.”
“Driehonderd agt-en-vyftig!” sê meneer Bucket. “Dis
ongelooflik!”
“Dink net aan die dinge wat sy in haar leeftyd moes gesien het!” sê oupa Joe.
“My arme ou moeder!” kerm mevrou Bucket. “Wat op
aarde …”
“Geduld, geagte dame,” sê meneer Wonka, “Nou kom die interessante deel. Bring die Wonka-Jonka!”
’n Oempa-Loempa hardloop vorentoe met ’n groot bottel en gee dit vir meneer Wonka. Hy sit dit op die bed neer. “Hoe jonk wil sy wees?” vra hy.
“Agt-en-sewentig, ” sê mevrou Bucket ferm. “Presies hoe oud sy was voor al hierdie lawwigheid begin het!”
“Sy sal darem sekerlik ’n bietjie jonger as dit wil wees?”
vra meneer Wonka.
“Beslis nie!” sê mevrou Bucket. “Dis té gevaarlik”
“Te gevaarlik, te gevaarlik!” sê ouma Georgina krakerig. “Jy gaan my net weer Minus as jy probeer slim
I»
wees!
“Nes u verkies,” sê meneer Wonka. “Nou ja, ek moet
’n paar somme maak.” Nog ’n Oempa-Loempa trippel vorentoe en hou ’n swartbord in die lug op. Meneer Wonka haal ’n stukkie bordkryt uit sy sak en skryf:
Presies veertien Wonka-Jonka-pille,” sê meneer Wonka.
Die Oempa-Loempa neem die swartbord weg. Meneer Wonka tel die bottel van die bed af op en maak dit oop en tel veertien van die blink, klein geel pilletjies af. “Water!” sê hy. Nóg ’n Oempa-Loempa

hardloop nader met ’n glas water. Meneer Wonka gooi al veertien pille in die glas. Die water borrel en bruis. “Drink dit terwyl dit bruis,” sê hy en hou die glas teen ouma Georgina se lippe. “Alles in een teug!”
Sy drink dit.
Meneer Wonka staan terug en haal ’n groot koperhorlosie uit sy sak. “Moenie vergeet nie,” roep hy uit, “dis ’n jaar ’n sekonde! Sy moet nou tweehonderd-en- tagtig jaar afskud. Dit sal vier minute en veertig sekondes neem. Kyk hoe die eeue van haar af wegval!”
Die vertrek is só stil dat hulle meneer Wonka se
horlosie kan hoor tik. Daar gebeur eers nie veel met die

oeroue persoon op die bed nie. Sy maak haar oë toe en lê agteroor. Nou en dan vertrek haar gesig se verrimpelde vel en haar hande ruk op en af, maar dis al…
“Een minuut verby!” kondig meneer Wonka aan. “Sy is sestig jaar jonger.”
“Sy lyk vir my presies dieselfde,” sê meneer Bucket.
“Natuurlik,” sê meneer Wonka. “Wat is ’n skamele sestig jaar wanneer jy om mee te begin oor die driehonderd
jaar oud is!”
“Is als reg, Mammie?” vra mevrou Bucket angstig. “Praat met my, Mammie!”
“Twee minute verby!” roep meneer Wonka uit. “Sy’s nou eenhonderd en twintig jaar jonger!”
En nou begin hulle definitiewe veranderinge aan die ou vrou se gesig sien. Haar hele vel vertrek en die diep plooie word al minder en minder, die mond minder ingeval, die neus meer prominent.
“Mammie!” skree mevrou Bucket. “Is als reg? Praat met my, Mammie, asseblief1.”
Skielik, só skielik dat almal wip, sit die ou vrou kiertsregop in die bed en gil: “Het julle die nuus gehoor? Admiraal Nelson het die Franse by Trafalgar verslaan!”
“Sy raak van haar kop af,” sê meneer Bucket.
“Glad nie,” sê meneer Wonka. “Sy gaan deur die negentiende eeu.”
“Drie minute verby!” kondig meneer Wonka aan.
Sy word nou by die sekonde effens minder en minder verrimpel en meer en meer lewendig. Dit is ongelooflik om haar dop te hou.
“Gettysburg!” roep sy uit. “Generaal Lee slaan op vlug!”
En ’n paar sekondes later begin sy jammerlik huil en sê: “Hy’s dood, hy’s dood, hy’s dood!”
“Wie’s dood?” vra meneer Bucket en leun vorentoe.
“Lincoln!” weeklaag sy. “Daar gaan die trein …”
“Sy moes dit gesien het!” sê Charlie “Sy moes daar gewees het!”
“Sy is daar,” sê meneer Wonka. “Ten minste, sy was, ’n paar sekondes

gelede."
"Kan iemand asseblief vir my verduidelik," sê mevrou
Bucket, "wat op aarde …"
"Vier minute verby!" kondig meneer Wonka aan.
"Nog net veertig sekondes oor! Nog net veer tig jaar om te verloor!"
"Ouma!" roep Charlie opgewonde uit. "Ouma lyk
amper presies soos Ouma eers gelyk het! O, ek is so bly!"
"Solank dit net ophou wanneer dit moet," sê mevrou
Bucket.
"Ek wed jou dit gaan nie," sê meneer Bucket. "lets gaan altyd verkeerd."
"Nie wanneer ek in bevel is nie, meneer," sê meneer
Wonka. "Tyd is verstreke! Sy is nou agt-en-sewentig jaar oud! Hoe voel u, liewe dame? Is alles in die haak?"
"Ek voel skaflik," sê sy. "Heel skaflik. Maar dis nie
danksy jou nie, jou mislike makriel!"
Daar is sy weer, dieselfde brommerige, iesegrimmige ou ouma Georgina wat Charlie so goed geken het voordat alles begin het. Mevrou Bucket gooi haar arms om haar ma en begin huil van blydskap. Die ou vrou druk haar weg en sê: "Wat, mag ek vra, doen daardie twee simpel babas aan die voet van die bed?"
"Een van hulle is Ma se man," sê meneer Bucket.
"Bog!" sê sy. "Waar is George?"
"Ek is bevrees dis waar, Mammie," sê mevrou Bucket. "Dis hy daar links. Die ander een is ouma Josephine …" "Jou … jou liegende lieplapper!" skree sy en beduie
kwaai na meneer Wonka. "Wat in die naam van…"
"Toe-toe, toe-toe-toe!" sê meneer Wonka. "Laat ons om liefdeswil nie so laat in die dag weer baklei nie. As almal net kalm bly en alles aan my en Charlie oorlaat, sal ons hulle so vinnig soos 'n vlieg sy vlerke klap weer presies so oud maak soos wat hulle was!"

The Babies Grow Up

'Bring on the Vita-Wonk!' said Mr Wonka. 'We'll soon fix these two babies.'

An Oompa-Loompa ran forward with a small bottle and a couple of silver teaspoons.

'Wait just one minute!' snapped Grandma Georgina. 'What sort of devilish dumpery are you up to now?'

'It's all right, Grandma,' said Charlie. 'I promise you it's all right. Vita-

Wonk does the opposite to Wonka-Vite. It makes you older. It's what we gave you when you were a Minus. It saved you!'

'You gave me too much!' snapped the old woman.

'We had to, Grandma.'

'And now you want to do the same to Grandpa George!'

'Of course we don't,' said Charlie.

'I finished up three hundred and fifty-eight years old!' she went on. 'What's to stop you making another little mistake and giving him fifty times more than you gave me? Then I'd suddenly have a twenty-thousand-year-old caveman in bed beside me! Imagine that, and him with a big knobby club in one hand and dragging me around by my hair with the other! No, thank you!'

'Grandma,' Charlie said patiently. 'With you we had to use a spray because you were a Minus. You were a ghost. But here Mr Wonka can …'

'Don't talk to me about that man!' she cried. 'He's batty as a bullfrog!'

'No, Grandma, he is not. And here he can measure it out exactly right, drop by drop, and feed it into their mouths. That's true, isn't it, Mr Wonka?'

'Charlie,' said Mr Wonka. 'I can see that the factory is going to be in good hands when I retire. You learn very fast. I am so pleased I chose you, my dear boy, so very pleased. Now then, what's the verdict? Do we leave them as babies or do we grow them up with Vita-Wonk?'

'You go ahead, Mr Wonka,' said Grandpa Joe. 'I'd like you to grow my Josie up so she's just the same as before — eighty years old.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Mr Wonka. 'I appreciate the confidence you place in me. But what about the other one, Grandpa George?'

'Oh, all right, then,' said Grandma Georgina. 'But if he ends up a caveman I don't want him in this bed any more!'

'That's settled then!' said Mr Wonka. 'Come along, Charlie! We'll do them both together. You hold one spoon and I'll hold the other. I shall

measure out four drops and four drops only into each spoon and we'll wake them up and pop it into their mouths.'

'Which one shall I do, Mr Wonka?'

'You do Grandma Josephine, the tiny one. I'll do Grandpa George, the one-year-old. Here's your spoon.'

Charlie took the spoon and held it out. Mr Wonka opened the bottle and dripped four drops of oily black liquid into Charlie's spoon. Then he did the same to his own. He handed the bottle back to the Oompa-Loompa.

'Shouldn't someone hold the babies while you give it?' said Grandpa Joe. 'I'll hold Grandma Josephine.'

'Are you mad!' said Mr Wonka. 'Don't you realize that Vita-Wonk acts instantly? It's not one year a second like Wonka-Vite. Vita-Wonk is as quick as lightning! The moment the medicine is swallowed — ping! — and it all happens! The getting bigger and the growing older and everything else all happens in one second! So don't you see, my dear sir,' he said to Grandpa Joe, 'that one moment you'd be holding a tiny baby in your arms and just one second later you'd find yourself staggering about with an eighty-year-old woman and you'd drop her like a ton of bricks on the floor!'

'I see what you mean,' said Grandpa Joe.

'All set, Charlie?'

'All set, Mr Wonka.' Charlie moved around the bed to where the tiny sleeping baby lay. He placed one hand behind her head and lifted it. The baby awoke and started yelling. Mr Wonka was on the other side of the bed doing the same to the one-year-old George. 'Both together now, Charlie!' said Mr Wonka. 'Ready, steady, go! Pop it in!' Charlie pushed his spoon into the open mouth of the baby and tipped the drops down her throat.

'Make sure she swallows it!' cried Mr Wonka. 'It won't work until it gets into their tummies!'

It is difficult to explain what happened next, and whatever it was, it only lasted for one second. A second is about as long as it takes you to say aloud and quickly, 'one-two-three-four-five'. And that is how long

it took, with Charlie watching closely, for the tiny baby to grow and swell and wrinkle into the eighty-year-old Grandma Josephine. It was a frightening thing to see. It was like an explosion. A small baby suddenly exploded into an old woman, and Charlie all at once found himself staring straight into the well-known and much-loved wrinkly old face of his Grandma Josephine. 'Hello, my darling,' she said. 'Where have you come from?'

'Josie!' cried Grandpa Joe, rushing forward. 'How marvellous! You're back!'

'I didn't know I'd been away,' she said.

Grandpa George had also made a successful comeback. 'You were better-looking as a baby,' Grandma Georgina said to him. 'But I'm glad you've grown up again, George … for one reason.'

'What's that?' asked Grandpa George.

'You won't wet the bed any more.'

Die babas word groot

"Bring die Wonka-Oua!" sê meneer Wonka. "Ons gaan hierdie twee babas gou-gou regsien."
'n Oempa-Loempa hardloop vorentoe met 'n botteltjie en twee silwer teelepels.
"Wag net 'n oomblik!" snou ouma Georgina hom toe. "Waiter duiwelse duisterhede voer julle nou in die mou:
"Toemaar, Ouma," sê Charlie. "Ek belowe Ouma dit sal werk. Wonka-Oua doen die teenoorgestelde as Wonka-Jonka. Dit maak jou ouer. Dis wat ons vir Ouma gegee het toe Ouma 'n Minus was. Dit het Ouma se lewe gered!"
"Julle het my te veel daarvan ingegee!" snou die ou vrou hom toe.
"Ons moes, Ouma."
"En nou wil julle dieselfde met oupa George doen!" "Nooit, ons wil nie," sê Charlie.
"Ek was op die ou end driehonderd agt-en-vyftig jaar oud!" gaan sy aan. "Sê nou julle maak nóg 'n klein foutjie en gee vir hom vyftig keer meer as vir my? Sê nou daar lê skielik 'n tweeduisend jaar oue grotbewoner hier langs my in die bed! Dink net! Sê nou hy swaai 'n
knuppel met die een hand rond en sleep my met die ander hand aan my hare rond! Nee, dankie!"
"Ouma," sê Charlie geduldig. "Met Ouma moes ons 'n sproei gebruik

omdat Ouma 'n Minus was. Ouma was 'n gees. Maar hier kan meneer Wonka dit…"
"Moenie met my van daai man praat nie!" gil sy. "Hy's so mal soos 'n malhaas!"
"Nee, Ouma, hy is nie. En hier kan hy dit presies afmeet,
druppel vir druppel, en dit in hul monde sit. Is mos, nê, meneer Wonka?"
"Charlie," sê meneer Wonka, "ek kan sien die fabriek
gaan in goeie hande wees wanneer ek aftree. Jy leer vinnig. Ek is so bly ek het jou gekies, my liewe seun, so baie bly. Nou ja, wat is die uitspraak? Laat ons hulle babas bly of laat ons hulle grootword met Wonka-Oua?"
"Gaan gerus voort, meneer Wonka," sê oupa Joe. "Ek
sal bly wees as jy Josie kan laat grootword sodat sy weer presies nes voorheen kan wees - tagtig jaar oud."
"Dankie, Oupa," sê meneer Wonka. "Ek waardeer u vertroue in my. Maar wat van die ander een, oupa George?"
"Ag, nou goed dan," sê ouma Georgina. "Maar as hy op
die ou end 'n grotbewoner word, wil ek hom nie meer in
hierdie bed hê nie!"
"Dis dan afgespreek! Dan maak ons so!" sê meneer Wonka. "Komaan, Charlie! Ons doen dit saam. Jy hou die een lepel vas en ek die ander een. Ek sal vier druppels en nét vier druppels in elke lepel gooi en dan maak ons hulle wakker en voer dit vir hulle."
"Watter een moet ek doen, meneer Wonka?"
"Vat jy vir ouma Josephine, die kleintjie. Dan doen ek oupa George, want hy's al een jaar oud. Hier's jou lepel."

Charlie vat die lepel en hou dit reg.
Meneer Wonka maak die bottel oop en laat drup vier druppels van die olierige swart vloeistof in Charlie se lepel. Dan doen hy dieselfde met syne. Hy gee die bottel vir die Oempa-Loempa terug.
"Moet iemand nie die babas vashou terwyl julle dit vir hulle ingee nie?" vra oupa Joe. "Ek sal ouma Josephine vashou."
"Moenie kranksinnig wees nie!" gil meneer Wonka. "Wonka-Oua werk oombliklik. Nie 'n jaar 'n sekonde soos Wonka-Jonka nie. Wonka-Oua is so vinnig soos
blits. Die oomblik wat die medisyne gesluk word
- whoeff! - gebeur alles tegelyk! Die groter word en ouer word en al die ander dinge gebeur alles binne een sekonde! So jy moet verstaan, my liewe meneer," sê hy vir oupa Joe, "jy sal die een oomblik 'n pap babatjie in jou arms vashou en net een sekonde later sal jy begin
rondsteier met 'n tagtigjarige vrou en jy sal haar soos 'n ton bakstene op die vloer laat val!"

“Ek sien wat u bedoel,” sê oupa Joe.
“Gereed, Charlie?”
“Gereed, meneer Wonka.” Charlie beweeg om die bed na waar die slapende babatjie lê. Hy steek sy hand onder haar kop in en lig dit op. Die baba word wakker en begin skree. Aan die ander kant van die bed doen meneer Wonka dieselfde met die eenjarige George. “Gelyktydig nou, Charlie!” sê meneer Wonka. “Op jou merke, gereed, tueg! In is dit!” Charlie druk sy lepel in die baba se oop mondjie en gooi die druppels in haar keel af.
“Maak seker sy sluk dit!” sê meneer Wonka, “Dit sal
nie werk voor dit in hul magies kom nie!”
Dit is moeilik om te verduidelik wat volgende gebeur, maar wat dit ook al is, dit gebeur binne net een sekonde.
’n Sekonde is omtrent so lank soos wat dit jou vat om hardop en vinnig “eeri-twee-d rie-vier-vyf” te sê.
En dit is hoe lank dit neem, met Charlie wat verstom toekyk, vir die babatjie om te groei en te swel en te verrimpel tot die tagtigjarige ouma Josephine. Dit is eintlik verskriklik om dit te sien gebeur. Dit is soos
’n ontploffing. ’n Klein babatjie ontplof skielik in ’n ou vrou, en Charlie staar eensklaps reguit in sy ouma Josephine se bekende en beminde, verrimpelde ou gesig. “Hallo, my skat,” sê sy. “Waar kom jy vandaan?”
“Josie!” roep oupa Joe uit en kom haastig nader. “Dis wonderlik! Jy’s terug!”
“Ek het nie geweet ek was weg nie,” sê sy.
Oupa George het ook suksesvol teruggekeer. “Jy’t beter gelyk toe jy ’n baba was,” sê ouma Georgina vir hom. “Maar ek is bly jy het weer grootgeword, George … om een rede.”
“Wat is dit?” vra oupa George.
“Jy sal nie meer die bed natmaak nie.”

How to Get Someone out of Bed

‘I am sure,’ said Mr Wonka, addressing Grandpa George, Grandma Georgina and Grandma Josephine, ‘I am quite sure the three of you, after all that, will now want to jump out of bed and lend a hand in running the Chocolate Factory.’

‘Who, us?’ said Grandma Josephine.

‘Yes, you,’ said Mr Wonka.

‘Are you crazy?’ said Grandma Georgina. ‘I’m staying right here where

I am in this nice comfortable bed, thank you very much!'

'Me, too!' said Grandpa George.

At that moment, there was a sudden commotion among the Oompa-Loompas at the far end of the Chocolate Room. There was a buzz of excited chatter and a lot of running about and waving of arms, and out of all this a single Oompa-Loompa emerged and came rushing toward Mr Wonka, carrying a huge envelope in his hands. He came up close to Mr Wonka. He started whispering. Mr Wonka bent down low to listen.

'Outside the factory gates?' cried Mr Wonka. 'Men! … What sort of men? … Yes, but do they look dangerous? … Are they ACTING dangerously? … And a what? … A HELICOPTER! … And these men came out of it? … They gave you this? …'

Mr Wonka grabbed the huge envelope and quickly slit it open and pulled out the folded letter inside. There was absolute silence as he skimmed swiftly over what was written on the paper. Nobody moved. Charlie began to feel cold. He knew something dreadful was going to happen. There was a very definite smell of danger in the air. The men outside the gates, the helicopter, the nervousness of the Oompa-Loompas … He was watching Mr Wonka's face, searching for a clue, for some change in expression that would tell him how bad the news was.

'Great whistling whangdoodles!' cried Mr Wonka, leaping so high in the air that when he landed his legs gave way and he crashed on to his backside.

'Snorting snozzwangers!' he yelled, picking himself up and waving the letter about as though he were swatting mosquitoes. 'Listen to this, all of you! Just you listen to this!' He began to read aloud:

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

D.C.

TO MR WILLY WONKA.

SIR

TODAY THE ENTIRE NATION, INDEED THE WHOLE WORLD, IS REJOICING AT THE SAFE RETURN OF OUR TRANSPORT CAPSULE FROM SPACE WITH 136 SOULS ON BOARD. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE HELP THEY RECEIVED FROM AN UNKNOWN SPACESHIP, THESE 136 PEOPLE WOULD NEVER HAVE COME BACK. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO ME THAT THE COURAGE SHOWN BY THE EIGHT ASTRONAUTS ABOARD THIS UNKNOWN SPACESHIP WAS EXTRAORDINARY. OUR RADAR STATIONS, BY TRACKING THIS SPACESHIP ON ITS RETURN TO EARTH, HAVE DISCOVERED THAT IT SPLASHED DOWN IN A PLACE KNOWN AS WONKA'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY. THAT, SIR, IS WHY THIS LETTER IS BEING DELIVERED TO YOU.

I WISH NOW TO SHOW THE GRATITUDE OF THE NATION BY INVITING ALL EIGHT OF THOSE INCREDIBLY BRAVE ASTRONAUTS TO COME AND STAY IN THE WHITE HOUSE FOR A FEW DAYS AS MY HONOURED GUESTS.

I AM ARRANGING A SPECIAL CELEBRATION PARTY IN THE BLUE ROOM THIS EVENING AT WHICH I MYSELF WILL PIN MEDALS FOR BRAVERY UPON ALL EIGHT OF THESE GALLANT FLIERS. THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSONS IN THE LAND WILL BE PRESENT AT THIS GATHERING TO SALUTE THE HEROES WHOSE DAZZLING DEEDS WILL BE WRITTEN FOR EVER IN THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION. AMONG THOSE ATTENDING WILL BE THE VICE-PRESIDENT (MISS ELVIRA TIBBS), ALL THE MEMBERS OF MY CABINET, THE CHIEFS OF THE ARMY, THE NAVY AND THE AIR FORCE, ALL MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. A FAMOUS SWORD-SWALLOWER FROM AFGHANISTAN WHO IS NOW TEACHING ME TO EAT MY WORDS (WHAT YOU DO IS YOU TAKE THE S OFF THE BEGINNING OF THE SWORD AND PUT IT ON THE END BEFORE YOU SWALLOW IT). AND WHO ELSE IS COMING? OH YES, MY CHIEF INTERPRETER, AND THE GOVERNORS OF EVERY STATE IN THE UNION, AND OF COURSE MY CAT, MRS TAUBSYPUSS.

A HELICOPTER AWAITS ALL EIGHT OF YOU OUTSIDE THE FACTORY GATES. I MYSELF AWAIT YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE WHITE HOUSE WITH THE VERY GREATEST PLEASURE AND IMPATIENCE.

I BEG TO REMAIN, SIR,

MOST SINCERELY YOURS

LANCELOT R. GILLIGRASS

President of the United States

P.S. COULD YOU PLEASE BRING ME A FEW WONKA FUDGEMALLOW DELIGHTS. I LOVE THEM SO MUCH BUT EVERYBODY AROUND HERE KEEPS STEALING MINE OUT OF THE DRAWER IN MY DESK. AND DON'T TELL NANNY.

Mr Wonka stopped reading. And in the stillness that followed Charlie could hear people breathing. He could hear them breathing in and out much faster than usual. And there were other things, too. There were so many feelings and passions and there was so much sudden happiness swirling around in the air it made his head spin. Grandpa Joe was the first to say something … 'Yippeeeeeeeeeee!' he yelled out, and he flew across the room and caught Charlie by the hands and the two of them started dancing away along the bank of the chocolate river. 'We're going, Charlie!' sang Grandpa Joe. 'We're going to the White House after all!' Mr and Mrs Bucket were also dancing and laughing and singing, and Mr Wonka ran all over the room proudly showing the President's letter to the Oompa-Loompas. After a minute or so, Mr Wonka clapped his hands for attention. 'Come along, come along!' he called out. 'We mustn't dilly! We mustn't dally! Come on, Charlie! And you, sir, Grandpa Joe! And Mr and Mrs Bucket! The helicopter is outside the gates! We can't keep it waiting!' He began hustling the four of them toward the door.

'Hey!' screamed Grandma Georgina from the bed. 'What about us? We were invited too, don't you forget that!'

'It said all eight of us were invited!' cried Grandma Josephine.

'And that includes me!' said Grandpa George.

Mr Wonka turned and looked at them. 'Of course it includes you,' he said. 'But we can't possibly get that bed into a helicopter. It won't go through the door.'

'You mean … you mean if we don't get out of bed we can't come?' said Grandma Georgina.

‘That’s exactly what I mean,’ said Mr Wonka. ‘Keep going, Charlie,’ he whispered, giving Charlie a little nudge. ‘Keep walking toward the door.’

Suddenly, behind them, there was a great SWOOSH of blankets and sheets and a pinging of bedsprings as the three old people all exploded out of the bed together. They came sprinting after Mr Wonka, shouting, ‘Wait for us! Wait for us!’ It was amazing how fast they were running across the floor of the great Chocolate Room. Mr Wonka and Charlie and the others stood staring at them in wonder. They leaped across paths and over little bushes like gazelles in spring-time, with their bare legs flashing and their nightshirts flying out behind them.

Suddenly Grandma Josephine put the brakes on so hard she skidded five yards before coming to a stop. ‘Wait!’ she screamed. ‘We must be mad! We can’t go to a famous party in the White House in our nightshirts! We can’t stand there practically naked in front of all those people while the President pins medals all over us!’

‘Oh-h-h-h!’ wailed Grandma Georgina. ‘Oh, what are we going to do?’

‘Don’t you have any clothes with you at all?’ asked Mr Wonka.

‘Of course we don’t!’ said Grandma Josephine. ‘We haven’t been out of that bed for twenty years!’

‘We can’t go!’ wailed Grandma Georgina. ‘We’ll have to stay behind!’

‘Couldn’t we buy something from a store?’ said Grandpa George.

‘What with?’ said Grandma Josephine. ‘We don’t have any money!’

‘Money!’ cried Mr Wonka. ‘Good gracious me, don’t you go worrying about money! I’ve got plenty of that!’

‘Listen,’ said Charlie. ‘Why couldn’t we ask the helicopter to land on the roof of a big shop on the way over. Then you can all pop downstairs and buy exactly what you want!’

‘Charlie!’ cried Mr Wonka, grasping him by the hand. ‘What would we do without you? You’re brilliant! Come along everybody! We’re off to stay in the White House!’

They all linked arms and went dancing out of the Chocolate Room and along the corridors and out through the front door into the open where the big helicopter was waiting near the factory gates. A group of extremely important-looking gentlemen came toward them and bowed.

‘Well, Charlie,’ said Grandpa Joe. ‘It’s certainly been a busy day.’

‘It’s not over yet,’ Charlie said, laughing. ‘It hasn’t even begun.’

Hoe om iemand uit die bed te kry

“Ek is seker,” sê meneer Wonka en praat met oupa George, ouma Georgina en ouma Josephine, “ek is doodseker julle drie wil na dit alles uit die bed opspring en kom handgee met die Sjokoladefabriek se bestuur.”
“Wie, ons?” vra ouma Josephine. “Ja, julle,” sê meneer Wonka.
“Is jy gek?” sê ouma Georgina. “Ek bly net hier waar ek
is. Hierdie bed is lekker gemaklik, dankie!” “Ek stem!” sê oupa George.
Skielik is daar ’n beroering onder die Oempa-Loempas
aan die verste kant van die Sjokoladesaal. Daar is ’n opgewonde gebabbel en ’n gerondhardlopery en gewaai van arms, en uit dit alles verskyn ’n enkele Oempa-Loempa en hardloop na meneer Wonka toe met ’n groot koevert in sy hande. Hy kom tot reg by meneer Wonka. Hy begin fluister. Meneer Wonka buk laag af om te luister.
“Buite die fabriek se hekke?” roep meneer Wonka uit.
“Mans! … Waiter soort mans? … Ja, maar lyk hulle gevaarlil<2 … DOEN hulle iets gevaarliks?… En ’n wat?… ’N HELIKOPTER!… En die mans het daaruit geklim?… En dit vir jou gegee?…”

Meneer Wonka gryp die groot koevert en skeur dit vinnig oop en haal ’n opgevoude brief daaruit. Daar is
’n doodse stilte terwyl hy vinnig lees wat op die papier
staan. Niemand beweeg nie. Charlie begin bibber. Hy weet daar gaan iets aakligs gebeur. Hy kan die gevaar in die lug ruik. Die mans buite die hekke, die helikopter, die Oempa-Loempas wat so senuweeagtig is … Hy hou meneer Wonka se gesig dop, soek ’n leidraad, ’n verandering in sy uitdrukking wat vir hom sal sê hoe sleg die nuus is.
“Fluitende flotillas!” roep meneer Wonka uit en spring so
hoog in die lug op dat sy bene onder hom ingee wanneer hy land en hy op sy sitvlak val.
“Snorkende snosselvangers!” gil hy terwyl hy opstaan en die brief rondswaai asof hy muskiete verwilder. “Luister hierna, julle almal!

Luister net hierna!” Hy begin hardop lees:

DIE WITHUIS WASHINGTON

D.C.

AAN MNR. WILLY WONKA

MENEER

VANDAG JUBEL DIE GANSE NASIE, INDERDAAD DIE HELE WÊRELD, OOR DIE VEILIGE TERUGKEER VAN ONS VERVOERKAPSULE UIT DIE RUIMTE MET 136 SIELE AAN BOORD.
WAS DIT NIE VIR DIE HULP WAT HULLE VAN
'N ONBEKENDE RUIMTETUIG ONTVANG HET NIE, SOU HIERDIE 136 MENSE NOOIT TERUGGEKEER HET NIE. DAAR IS AAN MY GERAPPORTEER DAT DIE WAAGMOED WAT DIE AGT RUIMTEVAARDERS AAN BOORD VAN HIERDIE ONBEKENDE RUIMTETUIG AAN DIE DAG GELÊ HET MERKWAARDIG WAS. ONS RADARSTASIES HET HIERDIE RUIMTETUIG BY SY TERUGKEER AARDE TOE GEVOLG EN VASGESTEL DAT DIT OP 'N PLEK BEKEND AS WONKA SE SJOKOLADEFABRIEK
NEERGESTORT HET. DIT, MENEER, IS HOEKOM HIERDIE BRIEF BY U AFGELEWER WORD.
EK WIL GRAAG DIE NASIE SE DANK BETOON DEUR AL AGT DAARDIE ONGELOOGLIKE DAPPER RUIMTEVAARDERS UIT TE NOOI OM VIR 'N PAAR DAE NA DIE WITHUIS TE KOM EN HIER TE BLY AS MY GEËERDE GASTE.
EK REËL 'N SPESIALE FEESVIERING
VIR VANAAND IN DIE BLOUKAMER.
HIERTYDENS SAL EK PERSOONLIK MEDALJES VIR DAPPERHEID AAN DAARDIE AGT ONVERSKROKKE RUIMTEVAARDERS OORHANDIG. Al DIE BELANGRIKSTE PERSONE IN DIE LAND SAL HIERDIE GELEENTHEID BYWOON OM HULDE TE BRING AAN DIE
HELDE WIE SE DAPPER DADE VIR EWIG IN ONS
NASIE SE GESKIEDENIS OPGETEKEN SAL WEES. ONDER DIE GASTE WAT TEENWOORDIG SAL WEES, IS DIE VISEPRESIDENT (MEJUFFROU ELVIRA TIBBS), AL MY KABINETSLEDE, DIE HOOFDE VAN DIE LEÊR, DIE VLOOT EN
DIE LUGMAG EN AL DIE KONGRESLEDE, ASOOK 'N BEROEMDE SWAARDSLUKKER UIT AFGANISTAN WAT MY TANS LEER OM MY WOORDE TE SLUK OM ORDE TE SKEP (WAT JY DOEN, IS JY SLUK DIE EERSTE TWEE LETTERS IN EN SÊ DAN NET DIE VIER WAT OORBLY). WIE ANDERS KOM NOG? O JA, MY HOOFTOLK EN DIE GOEWERNEURS VAN AL DIE STATE IN DIE UNIE EN NATUURLIK MY KAT, MEVROU TAUBSYPUSS.
'N HELIKOPTER WAG VIR AL AGT VAN U
BUITE DIE FABRIEK SE HEKKE. EK PERSOONLIK WAG MET DIE GROOTSTE GRETIGHEID EN ONGEDULD VIR U KOMS NA DIE WITHUIS.

EK IS EN BLY, MENEER,

DIENSWILLIG DIE UWE

LANCELOT R. GILLIGRASS President van die Verenigde State
NS. BRING ASSEBLIEF VIR MY ’N PAAR WONKA FUDGEMALVAVINGERS SAAM. EK IS TOTAAI. VERSOT DAAROP, MAAR ALMAL HIER RONI) STEEL MYNE AANHOUDEND UIT MY LESSENAAR SE LAAI. EN MOENIE VIR NANNA SÊ NIB.

Meneer Wonka hou op lees. En in die stilte wat volg, kan Charlie mense hoor asemhaal. Hy kan hoor hoe hulle baie vinniger as gewoonlik asemhaal. En daar is ander dinge ook. Daar is soveel gevoelens en geesdrif en daar is soveel geluk en opwinding in die lug dat dit hom skoon duiselig maak. Ouma Joe sê eerste iets … “Jippieeeeee!” roep hy uit en vlieg oor die vertrek. Hy gryp Charlie se hande en hulle twee begin al met die sjokoladerivier se walle langs dans.
“Ons gaan, Charlie!” sing oupa Joe. “Ons gaan op die ou end toe tóg na die Withuis toe!” Meneer en mevrou Bucket begin ook dans en lag en sing, en meneer Wonka hardloop rond en wys die President se brief trots vir die Oempa-Loempas. Na ’n minuut of wat klap meneer Wonka sy hande vir aandag. “Komaan, komaan!” roep hy uit. “Ons moet wikkel! Ons moet wikkel! Komaan, Charlie! En oupa Joe ook! En meneer en mevrou Bucket! Die helikopter is buite die hekke! Ons kan hulle nie laat wag nie!” Hy begin hulle vier na die deur toe aanjaag.
“Haai!” skree ouma Georgina van die bed af. “Wat van ons? Ons is ookgenooi; moenie ditvergeet nie!”
“Daar het gestaan al agt van ons word uitgenooi!” roep ouma Josephine uit.
“En dit sluit my in!” sê oupa George.
Meneer Wonka draai om en kyk na hulle. “Natuurlik sluit dit julle in,” sê hy. “Maar ons sal daai bed onmoontlik nie in ’n helikopter kan kry nie. Dit sal nie by die deur inkom nie.”
“Jy bedoel … jy bedoel as ons nie uit die bed klim nie kan ons nie saamgaan nie?” vra ouma Georgina.
“Dis presies wat ek bedoel,” sê meneer Wonka. “Hou aan loop, Charlie,” fluister hy en stoot weer aan Charlie. “Hou aan deur toe loop.”
Skielik is daar agter hulle ’n geSWIESJ van komberse en lakens en ’n gePIENG van matrasvere soos wat die drie oumense almal saam uit die bed opvlieg. Hulle kom agter meneer Wonka aangenael en roep: “Wag vir ons! Wag vir ons!”
Dit is ongelooflik hoe vinnig hulle oor die groot Sjokoladesaal se vloer

hardloop. Meneer Wonka en Charlie en die ander staar hulle verstom aan. Hulle

spring oor voetpaadjies en oor bossies soos bokkies in die lente, met hulle kaal bene wat flits en hul nagkabaaie wat agter hulle opwapper. Skielik trap ouma Josephine so hard rem dat sy vyf tree
ver gly voor sy tot stilstand kom. "Wag!" skree sy. "Ons moet betjoings wees! Ons kan nie in ons nagklere na 'n spoggerige partytjie in die Withuis toe gaan nie! Ons kan nie half kaal voor al daardie mense staan terwyl die President vir ons die een medalje na die ander gee nie!"
"O'oo'ooo-oooo!" weeklaag ouma Georgina. "Wat gaan ons doenl"
"Het julle geen klere by julle nie?" vra meneer Wonka.
"Natuurlik nie!" sê ouma Josephine. "Ons was twintig jaar lank nooit uit daai bed nie!"
"Ons kan nie gaan nie!" kerm ouma Georgina. "Ons sal hier moet bly!"
"Kan ons nie iets by 'n winkel koop nie?" vra oupa
George.
"Waarmee?" sê ouma Josephine. "Ons net nie geld nie! "
"Geld!" roep meneer Wonka uit. "Goeie genadenugtig, moenie julle oor geld bekommer nie! Ek het hopel"
"Luister," sê Charlie. "Hoekom vra ons nie die helikopter om op pad soontoe op 'n groot winkel se dak te land nie? Dan kan almal af ondertoe gaan en koop presies wat hulle wil hê!"
"Charlie!" roep meneer Wonka uit en gryp hom aan die
hand. "Wat sou ek sonder jou gedoen het? Jy's briljant! Kom saam, almal! Ons gaan bietjie in die Withuis kuier!"
Hulle haak almal by mekaar in en gaan al dansende by die Sjokoladesaal uit en met die gange af en by die voordeur uit tot by die oop stuk grond waar die groot helikopter naby die fabriekhekke wag. 'n Groep mans wat baie belangrik lyk, loop hulle tegemoet en buig beleefd.
"Maggies, Charlie," sê oupa Joe. "Dit was sowaar 'n
besige dag."
"Dis nog nie verby nie," sê Charlie en lag. "Dit het nog nie eens begin nie."

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Roald Dahl was born in 1916 in Wales of Norwegian parents. He was educated in England before starting work for the Shell Oil Company in Africa. He began writing after a 'monumental bash on the head' sustained as an RAF fighter pilot during the Second World War. Roald Dahl is one of the most successful and well-known of all children's

writers. His books, which are read by children the world over, include James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The Magic Finger, Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator, Fantastic Mr Fox, Matilda, The Twits, The BFG and The Witches, winner of the 1983 Whitbread Award. Roald Dahl died in 1990 at the age of seventy-four.